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ORTHODOXY AND REVIVALISM.

SERMONS

ON

VITAL QUESTIONS AT ISSUE BETWEEN POPULAR
EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY, ESPECIALLY AS
REPRESENTED BY THE REVIVALISM OF
MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY, AND
THE RATIONAL RELIGIOUS
THOUGHT OF THE TIME.

✓ BY
REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND,

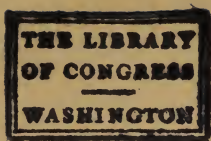
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“As the slaves carried in long sea voyages, doubled down between decks, were, for the most part, unable to walk when the prison-ship had landed, and they were ordered out into the open air, so we all, borne for hundreds of years in the theological prison-ships, landing at last, find ourselves almost unable to walk or stand alone on the open shore of this great century.”—*Prof. Swing.*

“New times demand new measures and new men :
The world advances, and in time outgrows
The laws that in our fathers' time were best ;
And, doubtless, after us, some purer scheme
Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
Made wiser by the steady growth of truth.”

—*Lowell.*

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ORTHODOXY

THE WORST ENEMY OF CHRISTIANITY.

"After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers."—ACTS xxiv. 14.

It is always incumbent upon a people who persist in maintaining a different form of religious doctrine or worship from the majority of the people of the community or country in which they dwell, to be ready, on fitting occasion, to give a reason.

I shall occupy the time before us this morning in stating, as briefly and plainly as I can, why I, for one, find myself compelled to take my stand outside of so-called orthodoxy, and to worship the God of my fathers in the way that the majority of the people of this country and Christendom call heresy.

I believe that nothing of more value than Christianity ever made its appearance among men.

But I believe that what is generally understood by Christianity to-day, whether in Protestant countries or Catholic, is not pure, original Christianity, as Jesus taught Christianity by lip and life, but that Christianity corrupted, and corrupted by the introduction of elements entirely foreign to it and essentially bad.

These bad elements do not, of course, more than to a limited extent, destroy the Christianity with which they are mixed; but they are, nevertheless, so

far as they themselves go, corrupting and harmful to it.

What *are* these bad and corrupting elements? Without hesitation, I answer, in my judgment, first of all, and worst of all, is that religious philosophy, or theology, or series of doctrines about God and man and religion, which wears the popular name of orthodoxy, and which includes in its list, among others, the doctrine of the fall of the race in Adam; the doctrine of universal total depravity; the doctrine of an endless hell; the doctrine of the Trinity; the doctrine of the coming down to earth of the second person of the Trinity, to die in man's place, and so satisfy God's justice; the doctrine that following Christ, or believing in Christ, or being saved by Christ, means in any sense accepting the idea that Jesus died to reconcile God to men, or to make God one whit more willing or ready or able to save men, that is, one whit more a Father than he always has been; and finally, not to mention any others, the doctrine of Jesus-worship, which is so popular in our time, as practically, in large measure, to crowd out worship of God.

I say of all the things that wound Christianity to-day and make it bleed; of all the things that corrupt and poison it, and tend to make it other than the sweet and healthful and divine thing which it was when Jesus gave it new to the world; of all the things which tend to make it an offense to the best thought and intelligence of the time, without hesitation I name, as in my judgment *first and worst, the system of theology which includes these doctrines which I have mentioned, and which is known popularly as orthodoxy.*

Do you ask *why* I thus judge orthodoxy to be the

worst foe which Christianity has to-day? I answer, in a general way, first, because of *where* it is, and second, because of *what* it is.

As to where it is, it is *inside* the church. If it were outside, it would be comparatively harmless, for it is always comparatively easy to defend against an outside enemy. But when an enemy gets inside the camp, as orthodoxy has done, then is the difficulty and the danger vastly increased.

Long ago, in darker ages, orthodoxy fought its way into the very heart of the Christian church, and there, by intolerance and proscription and every art, intrenched itself. And now, in our day of greater light, when men begin to discover that it is not Christianity, but an intruder and a foe, it is so strongly fortified in its position that it is only with the greatest difficulty that it can be stirred. Indeed, it has actually, to a very large extent, captured the Christian religion. And so to-day, wherever we go, we find orthodoxy preaching in the most unblushing manner that it is Christianity, and that everything opposed to it is not Christianity. It is mainly because of this condition of things that that body of, on the whole, remarkably intelligent and sincere men, known as the Free Religionists, have taken their stand outside of the Christian name. So plainly do they see that the Christian name has been captured, and now stands identified in the minds of the mass of mankind with orthodoxy—something which they believe to be false and degrading—that they declare it to be hopeless to attempt to capture the name back again.

But, for one, while I feel the force of their reasoning, I cannot acquiesce in their conclusion. I don't think it is hopeless to attempt to capture it

back again. It will take a long hard battle to do it, but all the better forces of our civilization are certainly rallying to our side to help us, and we shall, by and by, accomplish it. The transformations of history are very strange and often dark. But, amidst them all, this we know—

“ Truth crushed to earth shall rise again ;
The eternal years of God are hers.”

And this also we know, “ Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted shall ” (sooner or later) “ be rooted up.”

But, furthermore, I believe orthodoxy to be the worst foe against which Christianity has to contend to-day, not only because it has got for itself an inside position, and claims that it alone is Christianity, but also because it is so thoroughly *anti-Christian in its nature*. Mark what I say, so that I shall not be misunderstood. I do not say that people who believe in orthodoxy are not Christian people. Many of them, so far as character and practical life are concerned, unquestionably *are* Christian people. However, their Christianity does in no sense lie in their orthodoxy. On the contrary, it is something incomparably higher, broader, sweeter, diviner, and altogether a different thing from their orthodoxy. Their Christianity would remain all the same if their orthodoxy should vanish ; and, indeed, would only have found a more vigorous and worthy growth if it had never had the incubus of orthodoxy to weigh it down at all.

So that my position is, that, whereas orthodox people are, large numbers of them, undoubtedly truly Christian in character and life, notwithstanding their theology, yet orthodoxy as a theology, in

all that which is peculiar to it as orthodoxy, is essentially and eternally anti-Christian, and has always and everywhere hurt and not helped the cause of true religion on the earth.

But, to come down from the general to the specific, precisely in what respects is it anti-Christian? I reply, chiefly in four respects:

First. Orthodoxy is *not taught by Christ*, but, instead, contradicts many of his plainest teachings.

Second. It is *unreasonable*.

Third. It is *essentially immoral*.

Fourth. *The time and manner of its usurpation of its place in the Christian church can be clearly traced in history.*

1. The first specific charge, then, that I make against orthodoxy is, that it is *not taught by Jesus*, but, instead, is clearly in *contradiction with many of his most prominent and oft-repeated teachings*.

To begin with, Jesus nowhere gives any intimation that he knows anything about any Trinity; he expressly calls his Father the only God; he usually calls himself the son of man; he never calls himself by any title which even hints that he is God; he declares outright that his Father is greater than he. And, as to his unity with the Father, he declares it to be of the same kind with his unity with his disciples, and with God's unity with all loving and obedient children, to wit, plainly, unity of spirit, of love, of aim, of desire.

Orthodoxy, on the contrary, declares that there are three Gods in one God (not simply a mysterious, but a self-contradictory statement), and that Jesus is the true God,—eternal, omnipotent, and the Creator of the world.

Again, Jesus teaches that the best and truest con-

ception of God which we can get is that of a Father, who always loved and always will love every human child of his, who forever desires his children's best welfare, and neither has his heart steeled against them when they sin, so that he does not wish to save them, nor his hands tied by figments of law or justice, so that he cannot save them ; but, instead, that he is a Father who waits all the day long for his erring children to come back to him, even as the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son waited,—ready, rejoiced, glad to forgive always ; nor does he want anybody to die in their place either, *before* he forgives, any more than the father of the Prodigal wanted somebody to suffer death before he would forgive his repentant boy. Contrary to all this, however, orthodoxy teaches that God has always been angry with his human children when they have sinned, and either could not or would not (you may take which horn of the dilemma you choose) forgive them, no matter how deeply they repented, until an innocent person had died in their stead.

Again, Jesus taught that salvation is primarily and essentially salvation from sinning, that is, salvation into present holiness and consequent happiness. Orthodoxy, on the other hand, teaches that the great and all-important idea of salvation is escape from endless penal torment in the next world, and entrance into a far-away heaven, from which, certainly, a large part of those whom we love most will be shut out.

Again, Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven comes not “with observation,” but is “within you,”—a silent, hidden thing of the heart and conscience and character, beginning in the smallest germs of good planted in the mind, and growing and developing, silently and naturally, as the influence of heaven

spreads in meal, or as corn grows in the field,—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.

Orthodoxy teaches, on the other hand,—is it too much to say so?—that the kingdom of heaven comes *with* observation, and lo! heres, and lo! theres; with crowds; with excitements of preaching and singing and exhortation; with loud professions; with conversions blazoned to the world; and all that kind of thing.

Again, Jesus taught that they who in the judgment-day shall be accepted, and hear the welcome words, “Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,” will not be those who have said “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?” but those who *have done the will* of the Father by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, receiving the stranger, ministering to the wants of the poor and suffering of their brother human beings in this world. Orthodoxy, on the contrary, teaches that those who shall be accepted at the judgment are those who have *simply believed* that—

“ Nothing, either great or small,
Remained for them to do ;
Jesus died and paid it all,
Yes, all the debt they owe.”

Finally, to mention no other antagonisms between the two, Jesus taught that the only proper object of worship for human beings is God, the Father of all, even inditing a form of prayer beginning, “Our Father who art in heaven,” and never giving any hint of encouragement to anything whatever which even looked in the direction of worship of himself. Orthodoxy, however, that is to say, Protestant orthodoxy

of the so-called evangelical or revivalistic type, which has been so popular in England and America of late, has reversed all this, and has erected Jesus into, not simply an object, but into the principal object of human worship. Virgin Mary worship is scarcely more conspicuous in Catholic countries than Jesus worship is getting to be in this country. Not only in preaching, but in hymns and prayers, God has fallen quite into the background, and Jesus has taken His place.

Other points of antagonism between orthodoxy and the teaching of Jesus, nearly or quite as important as these, remain, but I must pass them by. I have only time for a word or two of a general character.

Not long ago, in conversing with a brother minister regarding the Sermon on the Mount, he remarked that this sermon of Christ was very noticeable, and for several reasons. And, first of all, it was noticeable for what it did *not* say,—quite as noticeable for that as for what it did say,—for the truth could not be escaped, he urged, that, in that most lengthy and complete of all Jesus' public discourses, in which he laid down the truths he had to offer men more fully than anywhere else, the great Teacher altogether omitted everything which comes under the head of the doctrines of orthodoxy. He explained and set forth the Christianity which he had to offer to men, with all these left out. And if we follow the teachings of Jesus right on from that time to the end, I do not know how any one can deny that we always find him setting forth a Christianity which has all these doctrines which are peculiar to orthodoxy *persistently* left out. The Trinity, Adam's fall, total depravity, the "plan of redemption," and every other one, is conspicuously wanting. The only seeming ex-

ception is the doctrine of an eternal hell. But, even in this, the exception is rather seeming than real; for, in those cases where Jesus refers to punishment in the next world, and uses the words "everlasting" or "eternal" in connection with it, in every case the Greek *Αἰών* or *Αἰώνιος*, translated eternal or everlasting, is the same word which is used repeatedly in other places in the New Testament in connection with things which come to an end.

And, if the doctrines of orthodoxy are not supported, but, on the contrary, are nearly all of them plainly denied and combated by the teachings of Jesus, so also, I hold that they are in like manner confuted, instead of established, by the *Bible as a whole*. I grant that there is more which seems to uphold these doctrines in other parts of the Bible than in the Gospels. And you notice that when any one comes before you, attempting to prove almost any doctrine of orthodoxy, as a rule he goes for his main proofs, not to the great Teacher, but to some disciple, or some writer of the Old Testament, whose light was not so clear, and whose understanding of these things was not so perfect as that of Jesus. In other words, he takes you into the candlelight, and not into the sunlight. Why don't he take you into the sunlight of the Sermon on the Mount, and the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth of John, and the Gospels generally, to see how these subjects appear there? If they are the great central doctrines of Christianity, as is claimed, certainly they will be found in the teachings of the Founder of Christianity. But, no; instead of taking you there, he takes you to the writings of men who lived before Jesus, and had only the light of Judaism; or else to the disciples, who were far below their Master, and who certainly, all through

the ministry of Jesus, were forever misunderstanding him, even with regard to the plainest things of his teachings. And yet, I cannot admit that even their writings, interpreted candidly and in the light of a broad culture, do really teach one of the distinctive doctrines of orthodoxy. And this is noticeable, that those writers of the Bible who are furthest advanced, and most near to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual level of Jesus, always give least of even seeming countenance to the doctrines of orthodoxy, and harmonize most fully and clearly with Jesus in teaching truths that antagonize orthodoxy at every point. But I have dwelt upon this part of my subject quite too long, though I should be glad, if time allowed, to push it much further still. I go forward now to my next point.

2. Orthodoxy is *irrational*. I charge it with being quite as antagonistic to reason as it is to the teachings of Christ. And this is something not to be regarded lightly. It disparages reason, and says reason is of the natural man, and to be held always in subordination to faith. The thing of most importance to be done, the thing most pleasing to Heaven, the thing without which there is no safety or salvation, is to believe, simply believe. And the explanation of the mystery, why the old theology is able to retain its hold upon the minds of the people as it does, lies, more than anywhere else, in just this fact, that it teaches that men must not doubt, must not question; they must believe. To use their reason in connection with religion, beyond a certain very narrow limit, is of the devil.

I shall never forget my own long and bitter experience in this particular. After doubts and misgivings about different doctrines of the old theology

began to arise in my mind and trouble me, I was kept on the rack of mental torture for months and years, by being told by every one whom I went to for light that my doubts were all temptations of the Evil One; I must pray against them; I must struggle against them; I must put them down; for the glorious doctrines of the true faith were doctrines to be reverently and implicitly believed, and not to be much reasoned about. The human reason was a depraved faculty. It had fallen with the fall of Adam, and so was to be distrusted.

Well, of course, a theology that has once obtained a hold upon the popular mind—and this theology *got* its hold, we must remember, in ages darker than ours, it could not do it now—but having once obtained a hold upon the popular mind, of course that hold would be very firm and hard to shake, because it guards so securely the *initial*—checking its adherents the moment they *begin to doubt*, saying, You must not doubt or question or reason, for all this is the very essence of sin.

And, of course, too, a theology which defends itself by forbidding or limiting inquiry, and by tabooing reason, must necessarily be an unreasonable theology. It declares itself to be devoid of reason in its very condemnation of reason. If it were itself rational, it would have no objection to being submitted to the tests of reason and inquiry. Things born of the light do not fear the light.

The most intelligent supporters of orthodoxy know only too well that every increase of light and intelligence tends to show the weakness of their theology. That is the reason why that theology has fought science as it has.

Orthodoxy seems instinctively to have perceived

from the beginning that science is its enemy. And so, while it has made loud professions of friendship to science, and while many of its believers have been truly devoted to science, and in not a few cases have been themselves the promoters of science, yet, as a theology, it has not been friendly, but hostile to science. Scarcely anything in the history of civilization has been more conspicuous than was its bitter opposition to the Copernican system of astronomy, unless it be its later quite as ridiculous opposition to the science of geology. And to-day it is holding at arm's-length a large proportion of the leading scientific men of the world—especially of Germany, France, and Great Britain, and these are the leading scientific nations—and heaping upon these men such epithets as “skeptic,” “infidel,” and the like. And for what other reason, only because it sees that the tendency of these sciences and of the investigations of these men is to sap the foundation on which its leading doctrines stand? It grows uneasy, it trembles at the incoming of new light, because it knows not what one of its theories will next melt away before it as a phantom of the night. No; the investigations of reason have already made so fearful havoc with the doctrines of orthodoxy that I do not wonder that the cry should be sounded with redoubled fervor all along the line—“Believe, only believe; have faith; trust and accept, even when you can't see; and, above all things, do not put your confidence in reason.” I say, I don't wonder that this cry is sounded forth, with almost desperate earnestness, all along the line of the orthodox front.

3. I come now to my third point. Orthodoxy is *immoral*. I affirm that it is not only, first, contrary to the teachings of Jesus, and secondly, irrational,

but that it is, thirdly, essentially immoral. Mind, I do not say that people who believe in orthodoxy are necessarily immoral people; nor do I say that men who preach orthodoxy never preach in addition to it, or, more accurately speaking, in opposition to it, morality. Certainly some men of morals irreproachable are men who undoubtedly regard orthodoxy as true; and some preachers, who preach with great vigor and power against sin and in favor of righteousness, are preachers of orthodox communions. What I say is, that orthodoxy as a theology is mixed up, through and through, with ideas that are immoral in their tendency, and that nearly or quite every essential doctrine of it is either founded upon, or else necessarily involves, principles which, when legitimately carried out, and just in so far as they are legitimately carried out, lead to the degradation of God and the moral injury of men.

The fact that these tendencies are to some extent practically checked, and that these principles do not always flow out to their legitimate results, does not change the nature of the case at all. If I place upon my dinner-table bread that has poison in it, and serve it out to my family, it is only a poor excuse that I also serve out with it other food that is healthful; or, even that I provide to some extent medicines and antidotes to the poison. The fact is, poison is poison, whether material poison or moral, and should never be given into either stomach or brain; nor can it be with impunity.

Let us for a moment look at a few of the leading doctrines of orthodoxy separately.

For example, the doctrine so earnestly preached of the infallibility of the Bible; or the idea concerning the Bible, that every word of it is a word of God,

and that the book must be accepted from cover to cover, with no reservations. See what that doctrine involves. It involves believing that it was right, for instance, for Joshua to conquer Canaan; to drive out a peaceful people, who had never offended him, from their homes; and moreover to murder, not only men, but helpless women and children, by thousands and thousands; for we are given to understand that all this was with the approval of God. And some of the most outrageous cases of all, of cruelty and wholesale murder of women and children, we are expressly told were by command of God. Now what kind of morality is that?

So also this view involves believing that it was right for David to pray against his enemies the most vindictive and cruel and shocking prayers; as, that they might be cut off, destroyed, have their bones broken; that God's vengeance might be upon them; that they might never be forgiven; that their wives and children might come to want, and find none to help them; that their little ones might be dashed against a stone. I need scarcely ask whether it was right for David to pray for such things. And yet they appear in the Psalms, and if the Psalms are all inspired so as to be infallibly perfect, then these dreadful and revengeful imprecations must be accepted as of God.

Again, you recollect the conduct of Jacob; how that with the connivance of his mother he deceived his blind old dying father, and made that father think he was his elder brother Esau, and so got his father's blessing, which Esau ought to have had; thus by dishonesty of the most flagrant kind supplanting his brother, and getting an advantage over him about the greatest possible for a man in those

times to gain over another. And no word of condemnation is ever breathed against Jacob, in the Bible account, but, on the contrary, he is everywhere represented as the especial favorite of God. What kind of morality is that? But every man who claims that the Bible is infallible, and to be accepted as every part and particle from God, and perfect, is obliged to receive all these and such like things (and there are scores of like cases in the Old Testament) as right. Now what is that but undermining morality, and degrading the character of God, in the most awful manner?

So, then, who will deny that the orthodox doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible, for one, is an immoral doctrine?

But turn from this to the doctrine of the fall of the race in Adam. That doctrine teaches that because of the sin of one man, the whole human race, not one of them yet born, and some of them not to come into existence until thousands of years later, are held to be guilty, and so terribly guilty that the punishment provided for them is eternal torment. Could anything be imagined more palpably unjust, and morally outrageous?

Then, again, the doctrine of election and foreordination. This teaches in essence that a father chooses and appoints from all eternity some of his own children to be saved and others to be lost. What kind of paternity is it that can do that? Could you do it, or I, even poor, erring, imperfect beings as *we* are? And if not, then think you God can, who is the perfect Father, infinite in power and wisdom, and goodness and love?

And the doctrine of the atonement as taught by orthodoxy! According to this doctrine, the race is

guilty, Jesus is innocent. The innocent is punished, the guilty go free. What kind of morality is that? Why was the innocent punished, do I ask? So that justice might be satisfied, it is answered. But, I reply, that is precisely the way that justice is *dissatisfied*. Justice, that is real justice and not a pretense, never finds satisfaction in the punishment of innocence, no matter if the innocent party does offer himself of his own accord to be punished. To satisfy the demands of justice, the guilty must either be punished, or else forgiven, forgiven squarely and honestly for good cause. And in any transaction of punishing an innocent person, and playing it was the guilty person that was punished, justice can have no part or lot. It washes its hands of all such kind of thing.

Finally, the doctrine of sudden conversion,—the teaching that one may step in a moment out of a condition deserving hell, into a condition fit for heaven, by simply performing the mental act of believing something! What a strange overturning of moral order does this involve! Suppose a case in point. Suppose here is a man who has lived a life as bad as a man can live. He has made a brute of himself; he has blasphemed God, and he has injured his fellow-men all in his power. He is a liar, a thief, an adulterer, a murderer. At last, after many escapes, he is arrested, tried, sentenced to death. Finding that he is really caught, with no chance for escape, he becomes alarmed. He is told to believe in Jesus and he shall be saved. He is converted, hung, goes to heaven. Here is another man who has lived a life most exemplary; he has been a dutiful son, a loving husband, a faithful father, a good citizen; a helper of the poor, and needy, and suffering,

always; a friend to every good cause; even a supporter of the church, and a sustainer of religion; and, in his own way, according to the dictates of his own conscience, a worshiper of God. But he has never passed through that experience of mind called by orthodoxy believing in Jesus. He dies—is lost. The murderer who said “I believe,” lifts up his eyes in heaven; the good man who omitted to say that, lifts up his in hell.

Is that kind of doctrine moral? or is it not rather immoral in the worst way? Indeed, could any teaching be devised tending more strongly to put a premium upon vice and crime, and discourage virtue and morality, than that? If so, I see not what it is.

Other doctrines of orthodoxy might be shown to be as bad as these which I have mentioned. But I have gone far enough. If the specimens already looked at are not enough to condemn the whole system as in its nature dishonoring to God and destructive of virtue in men, then I am incapable of judging.

4. I come now to my fourth and last charge against orthodoxy, viz., that *the time can be traced easily and clearly in the history of the Christian church, when all the more prominent of its doctrines arose, and the way in which they arose and foisted themselves upon Christianity.*

The doctrine of the Trinity came into being, as is well known, in the third and fourth centuries, having had its origin, unquestionably, in the speculative and exceedingly mystical Neo-Platonism of Alexandria. A theological battle arose over it, which raged throughout Christendom, tearing in pieces the Greek and Latin churches in the most terrible manner, and awakening everywhere alienation and hatred where before had been peace and harmony. The council

of Nice, which established it as orthodox, and to be henceforth the faith of the church, for a long time hung in even balance over it; and when at last the council turned in favor of the doctrine, it was by a majority so small as to be insignificant; while there is not wanting evidence (and this from orthodox sources) that the real influence which turned the scale was the Emperor Constantine, a man who shaped all his course by what he thought policy, having several different times in his life changed back and forth between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism. And so, but for the influence of the crafty emperor, who happened at that moment to be training with the Trinitarian party, Unitarianism, the belief of the church up to that time, instead of Trinitarianism, would doubtless have been the prevailing doctrine of Christendom to-day.

Coming down a century or two, we find another new doctrine, spun out of the sombre and metaphysical brain of Augustine, presenting itself to the church. This time it is the doctrine of total depravity. The controversy over this doctrine (called in history the Pelagian controversy) desolated Christendom for well-nigh a century. At last it carried in favor of the speculation of Augustine, and from that time total depravity, with the fall of the race in Adam, was a part of the faith of the Christian church.

Coming on down to the twelfth century, we find the doctrine of the atonement or the vicarious sacrifice of Christ appearing. The early church held to no such doctrine. For a long time after the death of Christ and the apostles, Christians were content with the simple representations and statements of the New Testament. And when at last, as the

metaphysical ages came on, they began to frame speculative theories, the first theory they framed, looking at all in the direction of the modern doctrine of the atonement, was that Jesus died, not to pay any debt due to God, or to appease the wrath of God, or anything of that kind, but that he died to pay a debt to the devil. A compact had been entered into between God and the devil, that, if God would give Christ over into his (the devil's) hands to afflict him and put him to death, he (the devil) would relinquish his claim upon the human race, and allow God to save them from hell. And that doctrine held sway as the received doctrine, until the twelfth century, when the great scholastic theologian Anselm published a book (*Cur Deus Homo*, in the year 1109), containing a new doctrine, to the effect that Jesus died as a sacrifice demanded by God's justice. God's justice demanded the damnation of the whole race because of their fall in Adam; and Christ died in their place, so that they might go free. Well, this doctrine, propounded as it was in the very darkest time of the mediæval night, and enforced by the great intellectual ability of its author, at last won its way to acceptance. And so we have it before us to-day, as a doctrine which we are asked to receive, or forfeit salvation.

Coming down the stream of history a little further, we find in the sixteenth century, Luther's doctrine of justification by faith appearing; and a little further still, that cluster of doctrines known as Calvinism.

The history of the rise of all these doctrines was essentially similar. Each had its origin in the brain of some theological speculator; each won its way to acceptance in an age of comparative, and some of

very great darkness, and only after a battle which long raged, and tore the church into hostile factions, in the most sad and dreadful way.

And now, in our day, all these different doctrines have the audacity to come before intelligent people, and demand to be accepted as Christian. Born at the times they were, and coming into the Christian church as they did, not one of them being held by the church in its earliest and purest ages, they yet have the face to claim to be the very essence of Christianity. To say the least, it is strange, passing strange! But enough.

So much, then, for some of the more prominent of the reasons I have to offer why I, for one at least, find myself compelled to reject orthodoxy, as in no true sense Christianity, and to take my stand as a Christian outside of it, to worship the God of my fathers after the way that so many call heresy. A thought or two more, and I have done.

We often hear laments of the decline of Christianity; of the skepticism and materialism of the age; of the indifference of the more intelligent and educated classes to religion. It is said that physicians are generally skeptics; that lawyers are seldom attendants upon churches; that our leading editors and authors usually manifest little interest in spiritual things; that our leading politicians and statesmen are becoming more and more lost to all care for the Christian religion except as a sort of political power with the masses, to be turned to their own personal advantage. So also, it is often remarked that the leading business men of our great cities are coming to be less and less church-goers. Now what does all this mean? It has a meaning. What is it? Ah! these things which I have been uttering in your ears this

morning only tell too plainly what it means. It means nothing less startling than that the intelligence of this age and this country is growing away from a religion too narrow and too unreasonable for it. Things are taught as the essence of religion which vast numbers of these men have come to see are too trivial and absurd for them to give their time and attention to. Accordingly, while they are respectful to the institutions of Christianity, and in many cases rent pews and subscribe toward building churches, and even go so far as to favor their wives and children going to church, they themselves slip out of going just as much as possible ; preferring to stay at home and read Tyndall, and Spencer, and Proctor, and the reviews, and their daily papers, from which they can get something that commends itself to their reason and feeds their intelligence, rather than go to churches and hear doctrines which they have heard a hundred times, and which appear the more plainly absurd the oftener they hear them. It is not very long since the New York *Evangelist*, speaking on this subject, used such startling words as these: "Among all the earnest-minded young men, who are at this moment leading in thought and action in America, we venture to say that four-fifths are skeptical of the great historical facts of Christianity. What is taught as Christian doctrine by the churches, claims none of their consideration, and there is among them a general distrust of the clergy, as a class, and an utter disgust with the very aspect of modern Christianity and of church worship. This skepticism is not flippant ; little is said about it. It is not a peculiarity of radicals and fanatics ; most of those who hold it are men of calm and even balance of mind, and belong to no class of ultraists. It is not worldly

and selfish. Nay, the doubters lead in the bravest and most self-denying enterprises of the day."

Said the late Rev. Dr. Newman, in a recent address as reported in a secular paper: "Within the next decade, ay, and within the next five years, Christianity will be tried as it never has been tried before. There are men in England and America to-day, who will bring to the assault a ripeness of scholarship, a power of intellect, and a breadth of view, unequaled by the past, and there are men and women before me to-night who are destined to have their faith terribly shaken."

It is not long since Bishop Simpson publicly declared that the time had passed by when the Christian church (meaning, of course, the orthodox Christian church) could recruit its ranks any longer from grown men; the only hope that was left to it now was the young, especially the children; therefore he exhorted his religious brethren to give double diligence to their efforts to get firm hold of the children before they grew up, and, of course, got so intelligent (though he did not express it in exactly these words) as to turn their backs upon the churches.

What do all these things mean? Are any so blind that they cannot see? Alas! alas! They mean, what these men whose words I quote are beginning to discern, that Christianity is entering upon a crisis such as it has never known before, not even in the persecutions of the second century, or the throes of the German reformation. But they mean vastly more than that; and the strange thing is that these men do not see it. They mean that the occasion and cause of the crisis is primarily the astounding folly and blindness of the Christian church itself in continuing, in the very face of all the light and intelli-

gence of the age, to cling to a theology which that light and that intelligence are so fast and plainly discovering to be hollow and false.

The intelligence of the age does drift away from the teaching of the churches of this age, because it ought to; and it will continue so to drift, more and more, as surely as that truth is truth, and God rules, until the time comes when the Christian churches shall have a theology to offer men which does not oppose the plainest teachings of the Founder of Christianity; which does not outrage reason and common-sense; which does not violate man's deepest sense of justice and right; and which has not plainly foisted itself upon Christianity from without, as orthodoxy has done.

I tell you that men who stand up to-day in this enlightened age and country, to reaffirm the old decaying doctrines of orthodoxy, are just bombarding the best brain and culture of the country right out of the churches. No matter if these men do draw crowded houses, and win what for the moment seems a success. It is all the same. Their success is a rushlight. A whiff of sober reason blows it out. In the long run, in the deep and permanent and real effect which they produce they drive the best thought and intelligence of the country away from Christianity, and, sad as it is to say it, in the direction of disbelief of all religion. The only thing that can hold the intelligence of this age, not to say the certainly larger intelligence still of the ages coming, is a Christianity which is pure, reasonable, clear and clean from the degrading survivals of darker centuries—in a word, *Christian*. Such a Christianity, once held up in its divine beauty, cannot fail to commend itself to the earnest and devout minds of this and every other age.

And believe me, friends and brothers, such a Christianity is the certain inheritor of the future. We may not live to see the day when it shall prevail; but prevail it must and will, by and by, *by and by*.

NORTHFIELD, Mass., October, 1875.

THE DRIFT OF THE AGE AWAY FROM RELIGION.

“He calleth to me out of Seir, ‘Watchman, what of the night?’ The watchman said: ‘The morning cometh, and also the night.’”—ISAIAH xxi. 11.

No man who keeps his eyes open, living in this country, to-day, can have failed to observe that there is going on all over Christendom a tremendous popular drift away from the churches, away from belief in the Bible, in the general direction of separation from everything that has hitherto been known as religion. This drift is not confined to any country, or any order of culture, or any social class. True, it takes different forms and aspects, and goes, perhaps, to different lengths in different nations, and among different social and intellectual grades of persons. But it is going on powerfully, with something of ebb and flow, but with, on the whole, unquestionably persistent advance, everywhere we look, on this side the sea and on the other, alike in Catholic and Protestant countries. In France there are comparatively few men of any eminence in science, we are told, who are not in their philosophy materialists; and, that materialism and disregard for everything connected with religion is very widely manifested among the masses of the French people, is what not only every traveler, but every intelligent stayer-at-home knows well. In Italy, and other Catholic countries, it is much the

same. Says the correspondent of the *New York Times* in a recent letter: "There is more of positively declared unbelief in Italy than we are apt to imagine. No one can see clearly yet how Italy, so far as concerns the theology or religion of the country, is coming out. The spirit of protest is universal, except among the ignorant classes of the rural districts." In Germany, the popular indifference to religion is scarcely less marked, though it takes on somewhat different forms. The popularity of such writers as Buechner, Feuerbach, and Haeckel, as well as the poverty of attendance at the churches throughout Germany generally, is proof of this. Says Prof. Christlieb, one of the most eminent of living orthodox German theologians and preachers: "The great mass of our educated, and yet more of our half-educated classes is alienated from all positive, definite Christianity: our diplomatists, almost without exception, and the great majority of our officers in the army, our government officials, lawyers, doctors, teachers of all kinds, excepting professional theologians, artists, manufacturers, merchants, shop-keepers, and artisans, stand on the basis of a merely rationalistic and nominal Christianity." Among English-speaking people this drift has appeared perhaps a little more tardily than among Germans and French, but it is now appearing in every quarter with unmistakable distinctness. In some directions it has advanced to the extremest lengths of out-and-out atheism, materialism, secularism, positive and even bitter anti-religion. In others, again, it does not go to the length of taking distinct atheistic, materialistic, or positively anti-religious grounds, but contents itself with silently sapping the foundations of the churches, if not of religion, in the name

of philosophy and science. While in still other directions it manifests itself simply in letting religion alone—having nothing to do with it in one way or another.

In pushing the cause of *positive, out-and-out anti-religion* there is perhaps greatest vigor just now in Great Britain. The so-called "Secularist" movement there, which has for its best known leaders Charles Bradlaugh and George Jacob Holyoake, is manifesting very great energy, and developing, it must be confessed, very great strength. A few weeks ago Mr. Moncure D. Conway, of London, wrote an interesting and really a very startling letter to *The Cincinnati Commercial*, delineating to some extent the work of the British National Secular Society, and giving an account of a secularist meeting which he had just attended in a town in Yorkshire, conducted by one of the most noted and able of the secularist lecturers, Mrs. Annie Besant. I cannot better describe the powerful anti-religious movement going on in England than by quoting from this letter at some length. Says Mr. Conway: "The National Secular Society is publishing in series 'The Free-thinkers' Text-Book.' Part I. has already appeared. It is in three numbers, all written by Mr. Bradlaugh. The first is entitled 'Man: Whence and How? or, Revealed and Real Science in Conflict.' The second is 'Religion: What and Why? or, God = X.' And the third a continuation of the latter. These pamphlets (sixpence each) are carefully prepared and fortified by citations from the greatest authorities in modern science. * * * The Secularists are well aware of the strong hold which the surviving religious usages of domestic life have upon the popular sentiment, and they do not treat them with contempt as many of the

earlier free-thinkers did. They have now regular services, which correspond to those which have so long been in Christian usage. On the occasion of a lecture on 'The Four Gospels,' recently delivered at Barnsley, Yorkshire, by the indefatigable Mrs. Annie Besant, a man of much influence in that place presided, and began by announcing that before the lecture proceeded a ceremony would occur which would be novel to Barnsley—the naming of a child according to the Secular form." Mr. Conway describes the ceremony, which seems to have made quite an impression upon the large assembly, and then goes on to say: "I do not think I can give you a better idea of the methods of Secularist work than by relating what took place after the above ceremony occurred. Mrs. Besant proceeded to give the first lecture of a Secularist kind which had ever been heard in Barnsley. The chairman said that an invitation to be present and discuss the positions to be advocated, had been sent to every preacher in the place. But they all seem to have declined to meet the lady. And I don't wonder," adds Mr. Conway, "for she is really about as formidable a debater to meet as any in England.

"Mrs. Besant began by saying that, according to Paul, Christians are of all men most miserable, if their hopes of another life are not based upon the resurrection of Christ, and it was obviously, therefore, of the highest importance for all to know whether they were sacrificing the best uses of the world to a myth or a reality. She challenged any Christian to prove the existence of the four Gospels before A. D. 150, otherwise than by assumptions. She asked why the Gospels were in Greek instead of in Hebrew, if written by those who worked with

Christ. If miracles were wrought for human benefit, then why should they not be wrought amid the distresses of the world now, or to reinforce Christian 'evidences'? In the early church there were thirty-six Gospels, and why should four alone of them be deemed reliable? The English church is now revising the translation, and the Rev. Dr. Angus says there are one hundred thousand errors to be corrected. As the Bible says that any one putting in or taking away a single name in it shall have his name erased from the book of life, it would seem there are ninety-nine thousand chances to one that they will all be eternally lost. And so went on these trenchant criticisms in the presence of a large number of people—many of them of the working classes—who had built their whole lives on belief in the creeds thus assailed by a highly cultivated and refined lady. When she had finished, one of them, a workingman, arose and said that he felt himself not qualified to discuss with the lecturer, not having the education. He complained bitterly that the ministers of the gospel were not present to defend his (the speaker's) principles, but had left it to uneducated people like himself. He declared his faith in Christ and in God with an earnestness that elicited applause.

"Mrs. Besant arose, and with terrible effect said, 'That questioner is perfectly right. It is not a fair battle between him and any one like myself who have spent my whole life in studying these questions. Your clergymen ought to be here. They are supposed to be in charge of your souls, but when the wolf comes to slay the fold, the shepherds fly, because they are hirelings. They preach against me in their pulpits when I cannot answer, but will not meet me face to face. I am,' she added, 'ready to meet any

clergyman in Barnsley, and I ask you to believe that if none of them accept my challenge it is because they have no real faith in their own teachings.' The workingman then said he sincerely hoped that some one could be found able to defend Christianity; for his own part he believed it because he felt it. Mrs. Besant replied that she attacked Christianity because it tended to make the poor contented with their poverty, and she wanted them to rise out of it, and not postpone the happiness and education which is their right, to a visionary future. She said the greatness of England would never have been attained had the passive, ascetic, nonresistant principles of the Gospels, their hostility to wealth, and their anathemas of this world been really followed.

"Since this scene occurred, the local papers of the region about Barnsley," continues our informant, "have teemed with letters and controversies. The event has been revolutionary. The clergy are shrieking with wrath, but they dare not face the quiet little lady. The effect on the laboring population has been so great that, a strike having begun, in which Mrs. Besant, believing that the workmen were wrong and in danger of severe suffering, addressed them with such influence and eloquence that the strike was ended, and the men—eleven hundred in number—went back to their collieries."

And Mr. Conway tells us that such Secularist agitations as this in Barnsley and vicinity have of late been going on in hundreds of towns and cities of Great Britain. Indeed, he says, "I do not hesitate to affirm that if we were now to seek the nearest parallel to the enthusiasm and unwearied labors of the Wesleys and Whitefields of a past era, we should have to find it among the vehement assailants of Christian-

ity. Here, for instance, is this lady, Mrs. Besant, a person of delicate frame, and one whose physique is of the kind we usually associate with the idle luxuriance of a Belgravian mansion, and who has a little daughter of six years for whom she is known to provide carefully; and from notices in *The National Reformer* I find that her lecture engagements are: June 4, Leeds; 9, London; 11, Birmingham; 12, Stonebridge; 13, Mile End, near London; 17, Armley; 18, Leeds; 19, Birkenhead; 20, Liverpool; 25, Bristol; 26 Swansea, Wales; July 9, Sheffield; 13, Seghill; 16, Jarrow; 17, N. Shields; 18, Spannymoor; 19, Bassington Lane; 23, Newcastle; 29, Shipley; 30 and 31, Bradford. This means traveling all over England and Wales; and it must be remembered that each of these lectures is followed by a long discussion, in which the lecturer has to make several speeches and answer all comers like a senior wrangler.

"The engagements of Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Watts, Mrs. Law, Mrs. Arabella Shore, and others, are also very numerous. Among them all there is not a dull speaker. It is impossible," concludes Mr. Conway, "for any sane mind to doubt that this movement is growing most rapidly, and that it is fraught with consequences, both moral and political, of a kind most momentous."

These are some of the things that Mr. Conway says about this great Secularist or anti-religious movement in England; and perhaps there is no man in England, outside the Secularist ranks, who has studied the movement more carefully or who is better qualified to speak concerning it than he.

Mr. Bradlaugh, who is probably best known in this country of any of its leaders, some of you very

likely heard, when he was here, so that you yourselves can testify with what power he lays hold upon his audiences wherever he goes. He and his fellow Secularist, Mr. Holyoake, have been declared the two most influential men in England. And their influence comes very largely from the tremendously vigorous and telling war which for many years they have been carrying on against all forms of organized religion, by tongue and pen, by personal intercourse, lectures, pamphlets, newspapers edited by themselves, articles without number contributed to other periodicals, books, and every other means within their power. The picture given by Mr. Conway of the effect produced by Mrs. Besant in her lectures, I suppose would fall short of a correct representation of the effect produced by Bradlaugh in some of his. According to all accounts, he and his fellow Secularists are really stirring up in England such a religious earthquake as has not been known since the birth of Methodism; and an earthquake which goes to the extremest lengths, and levels everything before it which wears the name of religion. It is not simply a war upon the established church, or upon orthodoxy, or upon all churches. It is a war upon most of the distinctively religious ideas of Christianity, including the ideas of the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. It is a movement which has for its object the rigid closing down and in of man's horizon, to the boundaries of this world; shutting out entirely everything above and beyond the present life, and annihilating spirit. It is clear, bold, uncompromising atheism and materialism.

Such then is the most extreme and startling form which the drift away from churches and religion assumes in England. But it is by no means the only

form. All witnesses agree in the testimony that there is everywhere among all classes, a steadily growing feeling of doubt and skepticism which does not come to the surface; or which, at least, does not show itself in as yet any open hostilities. Doubts and questionings are rising in the soberest minds. Persons who have never been suspected of having misgivings about the old faiths, are suddenly found out by those who look underneath the surface to be skeptical concerning every part of them. It is discovered that large numbers of men who support the churches, only do so because it would be thought strange if they did not, or because their wives are attached to them.

Among scientists and literary persons a great and growing number, either have openly taken up weapons of attack against religion, or else are anything but friendly to it (at least in the forms in which it usually manifests itself). These include such names as the late John Stuart Mill, Harriet Martineau, George Grote, Thomas Henry Buckle, and the now living Herbert Spencer, and Tyndall and Huxley, and Matthew Arnold, and Ruskin and Carlyle, and George Henry Lewes and George Eliot, and hosts of others who are the very leading minds of England to-day. The old and commonly received evidences of Christianity they utterly discard. One thing is certain, that what is generally understood in the world by Christianity, and even by religion, they can never be made to accept. They have cast it behind them with the superstitions of a darker time. And with some of them it is not certain that any religion can be presented to them that they will accept. So thoroughly disgusted have they become with the crudenesses and bigotries and unreason-

ablenesses of what has so long worn the name of religion, that in not a few cases it is not sure that anything that continues to call itself by the old words can win back their confidence. With all this class of persons the tide sets away from the old landmarks. Where will it stop?

Coming from England to our own country, what do we find? Much the same condition of things. It is true that we do not find a powerful, organized movement distinctly atheistic and materialistic, like that in Great Britain under the lead of Bradlaugh, Holyoake, and their *confrères*. But while we do not find in this country precisely that, we do find a tremendous drift of popular thought in that general direction. Bradlaugh, when he was here, found an army of admirers, not only of himself personally, but of his religious (or anti-religious) ideas and work. Such lecturers as Mr. B. F. Underwood get large hearings, at least all over the Northern States. There is a large circulation through the country of such tracts as those of Bradlaugh and Underwood, and such books as those of Winwood Reade, Paine, Ingersoll, Buechner, and Feuerbach.

The materialistic philosophy is gaining a strong hold upon the thought of the people in this country, as well as on the other side of the sea. A physician, who has quite a wide acquaintance among medical men, told me a little while ago, that of the hundreds of members of his profession whom he knew, there were very few indeed who did not incline strongly toward that philosophy. Among our eminent scientists and literary men there is a great leaning to the same. Such men as Prof. Youmans and the writers generally of *The Popular Science Monthly*, and Dr. Draper, the author of that work, con-

fessedly one of the greatest that America has produced, "The Intellectual Development of Europe," are exerting an influence in this country which is very great; and if it be not positively anti-religious, it is at least away from what the world has been accustomed to call religion. An eminent scientist has recently said—"Not one in fifty of the scientists of any note in the United States continues to believe in the orthodox theology; and most of them, at least among themselves treat it with utter contempt."

Coming to the lighter literature of the country, of the various different kinds, we find a large proportion of it honeycombed to a greater or less extent with skepticism; and not skepticism either about things that lie merely on the surface of religion, but often, as is only too plain, about things which go down to the very roots of religion,—skepticism about the whole religious idea,—a sort of hidden suspicion, not simply that religion is imperfect and corrupt and therefore needing purification and carrying forward to better developments, but a suspicion actually that the whole thing is at bottom either a fraud or a joke, and is to be either indignantly put under foot, or else laughed at.

Nor is this drift away from religious moorings confined at all to the especially literary or reading classes. Among those classes of society that are generally designated as the laboring classes, not simply of the continent of Europe and Great Britain, but also of our own country (particulary perhaps in our large cities and manufacturing towns), there is a widespread feeling, not simply of indifference, but of positive hostility toward churches and everything pertaining to churches; a feeling that somehow there is some sort of connection between religion,

with its wealth and display and costly temples of worship, and the poverty and hard lot which these working people have to suffer. No one, who has mingled much with the working classes, and especially who has watched their strikes and labor-league movements, and attended their public meetings of one kind and another, held for the purpose of protesting against their hardships, and agitating reforms which shall better their condition, can have failed to observe the feeling. I need not say that the most conspicuous manifestation of this feeling appears in connection with the Internationalist Workingmen's Association which has its branches all over Europe and in many parts of this country. But to the close observer the same feeling manifests itself in many other ways and directions also. This feeling it is that accounts to no slight extent for the fact that so small a part of the laboring population of any part of the country attend church, or can be got to attend church.

But not to pursue this line of thought further, it cannot but be clear to every thoughtful and intelligent mind that there is all over Christendom a powerful popular drift away from religion; a drift which takes diverse shapes—as atheism, ranging all the way from the mildest form which only *doubts* the existence of God, to atheism of the more rigid and extreme form which *denies* such existence; materialism, ranging all the way from that kind which is only by implication destructive of the ideas of God and immortality, to that form which takes its stand firmly upon the ground that spiritual existence is a delusion; secularism, from that which is only passive, and contents itself with letting religion alone, and giving its attention to other things, to a secularism which is

organized, like that in England, into a disciplined and terrible army, moving with relentless purpose, not simply upon the churches, but upon everything calling itself Christian, and everything wearing the form of religion. Nor is it any more clear that such a widespread drift exists, than it is that that drift is fast increasing in breadth and strength, and increasing, too, among positively every order of society, from the poorest to the most wealthy, from minds the crudest and most uncultivated to minds the very keenest and strongest and most thoroughly disciplined that the age affords.

Such, then, being the condition of things everywhere we look, we cannot avoid instinctively turning our eyes to the future, and beginning to ask with anxious earnestness the questions, "What is the *issue* and *end* of all this to be? Are we to expect that the tide is going on? And, if so, where will it land us? Or, if it is not to go on, what power is to check it?" And I confess, feeling as I do that the religious interests of society are in a very true and real sense its highest interests, I cannot, for one, but regard these questions as of the profoundest importance—questions which we can none of us be excused from facing squarely. To do this we must evidently look first of all for causes. We can be in no condition to judge of the real depth and strength, and therefore of the probable permanence and extent of the drift which we are deploring until we have paid some attention to finding out the origin and real underlying meaning. Very well then, what are its causes? and whence does it spring? Can we discover?

Some will answer that it is simply a work of the devil; the devil is forever stirring up his emissaries

on earth to work against God and Christ and religion, and this drift of the time away from religion, is merely, so to speak, a great onslaught which he is conducting against the forces of goodness in the world.

To say the least, this is a very easy way of disposing of the matter. Indeed, nothing could possibly be more easy than this way of disposing of all similar difficulties. Whenever we find any evil or supposed evil arising in society, it is a good deal shorter cut for us simply to stamp it at once as a thing of the devil and go blindly to fighting it, than it is for us to examine carefully and dispassionately about it, to find out just what it means and what it does not mean, and so be able to deal with it in a rational and really effective way. But I shall not be going too far when I take it for granted that none who have been to the trouble of coming in here to-day will be satisfied with any such procedure of heaping things on the devil's shoulders to save us the trouble of thinking.

Other persons will answer this question as to the cause of the tremendous popular drift away from religion, by declaring that it is simply a manifestation of the inherent depravity of human nature. Men are by nature at enmity against God and everything that is good, and this is only a vast outcropping of that enmity. Unconverted men hate the Bible, hate Jesus, hate religion, hate the churches, hate everything that does not fall in with their own evil purposes and desires, and this is the secret of their atheism, their materialism, their secularistic movements, their driftings away from religious moorings, their oppositions to churches, and all this kind of thing of which I speak.

Well, this too, as well as the other, is a very easy

explanation, if it only were true. It has the advantage, too, as the other has, of being a very orthodox explanation. Indeed this, with the other, are *the* explanations everywhere given by the orthodox preachers, teachers, and writers. Those of you who took the pains to read the reports of the meeting of the great International Evangelical Alliance held in New York three or four years ago, made up of representatives from almost all nations and denominations of orthodox Protestant Christendom, will remember that this vast popular drift of the age away from the religion, of which I speak, was brought to the attention of that body, and discussed at great length, and by the very ablest men of that meeting; and in nearly or quite every case it was treated as the work of the devil or of men wilfully and knowingly fighting against God.

And yet what are the real facts of the case as we discover them from looking at the men themselves? It only requires a very slight examination to see that instead of the men and women who are most active in promoting this drift, being bad men and women and haters of truth, and opposers of good causes, they are many of them persons of the purest lives and most exalted characters—persons who are noted for their earnest and even heroic devotion to everything that seems to them right and true. The great secularist leaders in England are, in the main, men and women of the most irreproachable integrity and virtue. Nor is it different with the large class of persons in this country who are taking their places outside the churches, and outside of everything which wears the forms of religion.

No, it will not do for us to stand back Pharisaically, fold our arms and declare the explanation of

this great anti-religious movement to be the depravity and willful wickedness of those who have part in it; for many of the men and women who have part in it, even those who go the very furthest—the atheists and the materialists—are in cases not a few, morally and intellectually the peers of any of us, or of any religious men that can be found. There must be another explanation, and one that will bear examination a great deal better than that.

The true explanation, as it seems to me, is not hard to find, when once we begin our search in earnest and with minds unbiased. What is it? I have already hinted at what I conceive it to be. I cannot but believe that this tremendous drift of thought and feeling away from religion which our age is witnessing, is a vast and mighty *recoil, reaction, rebound of a bow that has been too much bent, swinging of a pendulum far out in a certain direction as a result of having previously been pushed far out in the opposite direction*. What do I mean? I mean what I have already intimated that, for fifteen hundred years religion has been so full of darkness and superstition and unreason, and during all our modern age of progress and increasing light it has so habitually tabooed inquiry, and fought science, and refused to let in the coming daylight of the new age, and struggled to keep the growing minds of men confined in the fetters of old outgrown creeds, that, little by little the stronger intellects and freer spirits and more independent wills of Christendom have become disturbed, dissatisfied, alienated, and in too many cases at last bitterly hostile; and the cry has risen, first in a whisper, then in an undertone, and now in a voice loud enough for the deafest to hear, "That which persistently allies itself with what is

false, and unprogressive, and outworn, and which will not come forward to the light and to reason, away with it! If that be religion, then to the moles and the bats with your religion! We want and will have none of it." Exactly that, friends, unless I am entirely mistaken in my reading of the times, is what this great drift — swing — rebound — whatever you choose to call it, of the age away from religion means. It means on a large scale what on a small scale I have myself experienced, and what very likely some of you have experienced. You will pardon the reference to myself when I say, what some of you know, that I was born and reared in an orthodox family, and educated under orthodox influences, and for the orthodox ministry. And I can never make any one know who has not himself been through the experience how terrible is the shock, and the natural reaction in the direction of utter skepticism, which comes when at last, after long fighting against doubts, and hoping against hope, the suspicion finally grows into inescapable conviction that the old doctrines are foundationless and must be abandoned. I shall never forget the weeks at a time in my own experience when the heavens were black over my head, and it seemed to me there was nothing left for me but to turn my back upon everything wearing the name of religion, and to go forth refusing to believe anything concerning spiritual things. And although at last, after years of earnest but lonely and often heartsore seeking, I found a faith that filled and more than filled the place of the old, for it satisfied my reason as well as my heart and conscience, yet from that time to this I have felt the deepest sympathy with the thousands and millions of my fellow-beings who, finding themselves where I was, and not hav-

ing the help and encouragement that I had to set out in search of a rational faith, took the seemingly inevitable step over into atheism, or religious recklessness, or stolid unbelief and indifferentism regarding religious things. And to-day, when I think of such men as Bradlaugh and Col. Ingersoll, the peers of any of us, I suppose, in honesty, and probably more than our peers in bravery, it is with no feeling of anger and little of condemnation, but mainly a feeling of sorrow. I think these men are mistaken; I think they have taken a wrong road, that will lead them and their followers to great harm; but I appreciate their motives, and believe them to have taken the road they have, not because they are devils, or men who hate the truth and love a lie, but because they believe the road is the right road. And in my candid judgment the time is coming when it will be seen that the atheism, and all the forms of anti-Christianity and anti-religion with which, as we have seen, Christendom is so full, are actually less to be laid at the door of the men who hold and teach them, than they are to be laid at the door of modern orthodoxy.

Tell me of what was the reign of terror in France, in the latter part of the last century, the real child? The real mother of that reign of terror and of all the horrors of the never-to-be-forgotten French revolution, was the tyrannies political, but especially mental and spiritual, that had been sitting like an incubus upon France for centuries. These tyrannies the people of France had borne at the hands of the monarchy and of Rome until they could bear them no longer, when, with a convulsive, frantic, almost demoniac, common impulse, the oppressed millions rose, and in their frenzy rushed, as was natural, to

the opposite extreme of utter license and lawlessness. It was St. Bartholomew's massacre that begot Robespierre; it was the inquisition that begot Danton; it was Louis XIV. that murdered Louis XVI. Tyranny political, but particularly ecclesiastical, had bent the bow until there must be a recoil, and a recoil that should be terrible. It had pushed the pendulum back, and back, until when the force applied could no longer keep it back, what wonder that it swung away to the horrible extreme which history records? And this is the law of human nature ever. Extreme begets opposite extreme. Tyranny begets anarchy. Bigotry begets infidelity. What a confession is that of Prof. Chrislieb, when, speaking of the great rationalistic drift that has been so long going on in Germany, he says: "It must be confessed that the church theology of the last century deserves the chief blame for the general apostasy which then began from the ancient faith!" Rev. Charles Brigham, who has for some years been teacher of a Bible-class of from two hundred and fifty to three hundred students, at Michigan University, told me a few weeks ago that of the great numbers of infidels and skeptics, and young men who had utterly repudiated religion, whom he had been able to gather into his class, a very large majority were the sons of orthodox parents. Coming up to young manhood, and going out from home to think for themselves, these young men had found the old theology so irrational and mediæval and out of accord with the enlightened and progressive spirit of the times, that in their disgust and even anger they had cut loose from it all, and having been taught always to identify that theology with religion, they had cut loose at the same time from

religion also—the pendulum sweeping away to the opposite extreme of its arc. And Mr. Brigham's experience is only the experience of every person who is in a position to observe what is going on to-day among the young men of this country, and, indeed, so nearly as we can learn, of all Christian countries. Within the past fifteen years I have myself been mingling constantly with young men. Hundreds and thousands have I been thrown into association and more or less intimate acquaintance with, north, south, east, and west; in city, in country, in academy, in college, in theological school, in business, in the army, in travel, in five years of pastoral work, in general society; and nothing has been more noticeable to me everywhere than just this thing of which I speak—the tendency amongst those who have been brought up to believe the old theology, as soon as they get out into the broad world, and begin to read and think for themselves, to fly off into utter unbelief, and to turn the cold shoulder altogether upon religion; this tendency, moreover, being almost invariably the strongest with those young men whose early teachings have been the most rigidly and thoroughly orthodox, and whose parents have guarded them most carefully against what they call the rationalism of liberal Christianity. Oh, I tell you, orthodoxy little realizes what it is doing. It little realizes what it is responsible for. I do not believe I am going too far when I affirm that, in my deliberate judgment, the orthodox theology (and by the orthodox theology, I mean of course, the theology which underlies all orthodox Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, for the theology of both is at bottom essentially one), I say I do not believe I am going too far when I declare that,

in my deliberate judgment, the orthodox theology of Christendom is the most prolific mother in Christendom, to-day, of skepticism, unbelief, anti-religion, atheism.

I know it does not seem gracious to say this. It never seems gracious to say words which antagonize the deep-rooted beliefs of large bodies of men, no matter how false and harmful those beliefs may be. But words require sometimes to be said in this world that are not gracious, and which one would gladly be excused from saying. And for one, I believe that these words that I am saying to-day, and words like them, are such as must be spoken, and spoken again and again, and in every place where we can get men to listen to them, until by degrees they shall come to be heeded, and Christendom shall at last give up a theology, which, whatever useful place it may have filled in past and darker ages, has clearly outlived its proper span of life, and is now only a deadly incubus upon religion.

This brings me to my last thought. Is there anything to take the place of the old theology, which will not have the effect to make men skeptics and infidels, but instead which will tend to prevent men from becoming skeptics and infidels? Is there any theology which we can give men, which is so rational, so progressive, so in harmony with nature and human nature, so full of light, so truly the child of the best inspirations, not simply of the past, but more important still, *of the present*, that, instead of being a promoter and accelerator of the fearful drift away from religion which we have seen going on everywhere, it shall lay its hand upon the drift to arrest it?

Friends, I, for one, believe there is just such a theology in the providence of God, urging itself upon the

attention of the American people, and of Christendom, to-day. Nor has it come a day too soon.

What is that theology? I need not say it is the theology of liberal Christianity. It is that theology which, while it formulates no creed (believing that every man must, according to his own conscience and the light that he possesses, make his own creed before God), has yet a great central principle, which gives it unity with diversity, perpetual progress with adhesion to all that is truest in the past, and which makes it impossible that it should not be in harmony with the best scholarship, thought, feeling, conscience, of this and every succeeding age—that central principle being that religion is a natural thing, revealed to men as truth is revealed to men by degrees, necessarily crude and imperfect among the crude and ignorant, but growing with men's growth, strengthening with their strength, advancing toward perfection with their advance toward perfection, having its foundation in the reason and conscience and moral consciousness of men, and, therefore, now and forever reasonable, and now and forever satisfying men's deepest wants, alike of thinking head and feeling heart.

These men that are drifting off into skepticism and atheism do not thus drift because they chose so to do, but because they see no alternative. They do not give up the religious doctrines in which they have been reared because they want to give them up, but because they have got to the point where those doctrines seem so unreasonable that they can't believe them any longer. There is no reason for any man to suppose that Bradlaugh and Ingersoll would not gladly believe in a God if they could. They are not atheists because they deliberately set out to be, but because their ideas of truth compel them to be. This

then, being the condition of things, we cannot fail to see what is wanted to bring about a remedy to the evil which we deplore. That thing wanted is simply a religion which commends itself to men's reason,—simply a religion which arrays itself in light, invites scrutiny, stands the tests of investigation. To such a religion men are not naturally hostile. From such a religion, once set plainly before the people, there can be no great popular drift. As men come to understand religion to be that, the popular drift would be toward it, not away from it. What, therefore, is wanted to save us and all Christendom from the tide of unbelief which arises so alarmingly on every side, and is already swallowing up so many of all classes of society, but especially of our young men, our scientists, our literary men, and the more independent of our thinkers, is a religion that these men can accept.

Does any one say that orthodoxy is such a religion? It is orthodoxy, as I have already abundantly shown, that the drift is from; that has done the mischief; that has caused the evil which we would cure. No form of orthodoxy, therefore, which is anything less than orthodoxy with orthodoxy utterly left out, can ever accomplish the desired purpose. The religion which can save us must be a radically different thing from orthodoxy—rising above and leaving behind almost every doctrine which orthodox creeds and theologies lay down as leading and fundamental. It must be a religion which has in it no dogmas of infallibilities of pope, or church, or Bible; no Adam's fall; no blood atonements; no Jesus worship, or Virgin Mary worship, or worship of any other being than the God whom Jesus himself worshiped; no eternal hell; no arbitrary heaven; no election of some

men to be saved and of others to be damned ; no choosing out of a single nation to receive God's revelation from heaven while all the rest of the nations of the world are left in midnight darkness, under a curse which they neither know the existence of nor how to escape ; no compound God—three persons in one God—God's person number two praying to God's person number one, and God's person number one saving sinners, because God's person number two has offered himself as a ransom to God's person number one ; no inconsistent God who commands us to love our enemies, and at the same time hates his ; no immoral God, who tells us that murder is a great sin, and yet himself commands his servants Joshua and Saul to murder thousands of innocent and unoffending women and children ; no God who creates a race nine-tenths of whom he knows beforehand will be eternally lost ; no such kind of conversion as can fit murderers for heaven in the twinkling of an eye, by their simply "accepting Christ," while millions of the best men and women in the world are consigned, hopelessly, to endless perdition because they did not in this life pass through a theological wicket-gate. I say, the new religion which is to save us, must be a religion which casts behind it every one of these irrational and degrading dogmas, and every dogma of a kind which allies itself with these ; and goes forward to views and teachings of God, and the Bible, and Jesus, and human nature, and human destiny, incomparably higher and more worthy of itself and of the age. In a word, it must be a religion which looks up where orthodoxy has always looked down, out where orthodoxy has always looked in, forward where orthodoxy has always looked backward ; a religion which is full of hope, and love,

and light, and faith in man, and ennobling representations of God, where orthodoxy has always been full of despair, wrath, darkness, injustice, distrust of human nature, and degrading representations of God.

And now I submit the question to every man, to be answered by himself, as his own reason dictates. Where is such a religion to be found if not in liberal Christianity? Can any one answer me where? Every man must think for himself. No man can judge for another in these things. All I can say is, that I for one am convinced that there is, and in the nature of things can be, no such preventive of skepticism, unbelief, atheism, antagonism to religion in the world as this reverent, rational, catholic, progressive faith of ours. And if the drift which sets so strongly in our day away from religion, and which we have been considering this afternoon, is ever to be checked, as sooner or later it certainly will be checked, the agency through which it must come, as it seems to me at least, must be, perhaps not in name but in thing, Liberal Christianity.

CHICAGO, July, 1876.

A RATIONAL FAITH.

“Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you *a reason* of the hope that is in you.”—1 PETER iii. 15.

UNITARIANS have no creed. We do have, however, a central principle, and all our distinctive beliefs spring immediately from this principle. What is this principle? Probably ninety-nine persons in every hundred will declare at once that it is our notion of the Unity of God as opposed to the Trinity. By no means. That is not the fontal idea from which the stream of our Unitarianism has flowed. It is true that that has given us our name, “Unitarians.” But there is something a good deal deeper than that, in which our existence as a body or movement roots itself. That deepest, central, fontal thing with us is our belief *in the eternal and essential harmony between religion and reason*, or, perhaps better, *in the necessity of always interpreting religion in the light of reason*, or, possibly best of all, *in the application of the scientific method to religion*. This fixed and ineradicable belief of ours is the key, and the only key that unlocks Unitarianism.

It is true that we believe, as a body, in the unity as opposed to the trinity of God. But we believe this because our principle of interpreting religion in the light of reason, or of applying the scientific method to religion, compels us thus to believe.

The Bible, studied in the light of this principle, we do not find to teach any trinity, but always and everywhere, one God, and only one.

Turning from this great book which comes down to us from the Jews, and which we call The Bible, to that other great bible of God, the Book of Nature, which science is so fast reading, we find there no trace of more than one God. Everywhere in nature is unity, correlation, harmony of design and of action, which tells of one supreme, undivided Wisdom and Power which is over all, under all, through all. And there is no trace anywhere of a second or a third Being.

When we go into heathen mythologies, and to the speculations and crude notions of men who lived in the old, dark, unscientific ages, then we find at once traces of a plurality of gods—two, three, a dozen, any number. In Persia we find two gods; in Egypt and India we find trinities; in Greece, of the great gods of Olympus, we find twelve; in Scandinavia we find also twelve principal gods; while among some peoples of the earth we find thousands and millions. But these mythologies do not stand at all the application of the scientific methods of investigation to them. Examined with the care and thoroughness and impartiality with which science investigates all things, these mythologies melt into thin air; and all trace of the million gods, or the dozen gods, or the trinity of gods, or the duality of gods, passes away, and there is left only the one God, whom the Bible teaches, whom nature in all her wonderful unities proclaims, whom Jesus worshiped.

Here, then, you see why it is that we believe in one God, and only one; and find ourselves compelled to reject all such mythological notions as pluralities

of gods, whether the pluralities take the form of a trinity or any other number. We must believe as we do, or else give up our fundamental principle—our distinguishing principle—viz., that religion is a thing of light, and not of darkness; a thing to be investigated, judged of, interpreted in the light of reason.

Again, another doctrine held by an increasingly large proportion of Unitarians is the doctrine that Jesus was not God, nor a being half God and half man; but that He was a man simply—a great, providential man, raised up to do a work for the world in religion, some such as Homer did for the world in poetry, or Plato in philosophy, or Bacon in science. A continental man, a Mont Blanc among men, but a man still. Why do we believe this? Is this a doctrine which Unitarianism in the beginning set out from as a postulate, saying, “I will make this one of my corner-stones, which nothing is to be allowed to move?” Not at all. Nothing of this kind was done. On the contrary, this doctrine, like the one mentioned before, of the unity of God, resulted from the principle that true religion must be reasonable, and that the scientific method is to be applied as much to religion as to anything else. Applying this principle, the result was reached inevitably, though reluctantly. At first very many Unitarians stopped at the halfway house, and said that Jesus, though not God, was yet superhuman—an angelic or super-angelic being. Indeed, many hold that doctrine concerning him still. But to me at least it seems illogical; our principle dooms it to pass away. All that class of persons in the world who would as soon believe an irrational religion as a rational, and who say that religion is something to

which you must apply no scientific methods of investigation, will almost certainly continue to hold that Jesus Christ was God; but those who cannot consent to the divorce of religion from reason, and who hold that true religion only shows itself more clearly true the more thoroughly it is examined, I do not think can stop short of the position which I have stated to be the legitimate Unitarian position, that Jesus was a man—a great providential man, who came in God's time to lead a large part of the race forward and upward into a religion purer and better than the world had known before.

The far past of the Old World, as we are learning from the researches of scholars in philosophy and ancient history, and the literatures and religions of the ancient peoples of Europe and Asia, is full of accounts of incarnations, miraculous conceptions, gods dwelling on earth, men descended from the gods, beings half men and half gods, and such like things. But there is no one of them all that for a moment stands the touchstone of careful, scientific investigation. They are found to be mere myths and fancies of a credulous, unscientific age. No more do the theological notions of Christendom that Jesus was miraculously conceived, descended from God through no human father, and himself a combination of the infinite God and a finite man, stand the test of sound criticism. There are very few passages indeed, in the New Testament which, under any sound interpretation, can be said to give the least support to any such notion concerning Jesus. And the few there are can certainly much more easily be supposed to be erroneous, than we can suppose things to have occurred so abnormal, so utterly contrary to all human experience. It certainly is not

scientific or reasonable to dismiss at once as not even worthy of careful investigation, the stories of Hindoo incarnations, and of Grecian personages half gods and half men, and at the same time, on the slight evidence that we have (which so much of the best scholarship and criticism of the age declares to be no evidence at all), go on affirming that there was a veritable incarnation of the Great Jehovah among the Jews of Palestine, and that Jesus was God and man.

But I will not dwell longer upon this point. My simple thought is, that the idea which we Unitarians have about Jesus is not any idea which we have set out with, as a part of a Procrustean creed which we have constructed for ourselves, or anything of that kind. It is simply the idea which our principle, that religion and reason must in all things go hand in hand, and that the scientific method must be applied to religion the same as to anything else, has irresistibly led us to. In other words our Jesus, as we claim, is the Jesus of verified history, the Jesus of investigation, the Jesus of reason, the loving, wise, devout, heroic, grandly-inspired man Jesus, that remains after the clouds which superstition, and myth, and theological speculation have wrapped about him, have been blown away—and he himself, in his real self, appears.

Another doctrine which Unitarians hold in common, is the doctrine of the dignity of human nature—the doctrine that man is not by nature corrupt, depraved, incapable of doing anything pleasing to heaven—but that he has in him naturally a great deal of good. Why do we thus hold? Because the facts compel us to. We look abroad in our own land, not only inside churches but outside, not only among

professing Christians, but among those who make no religious professions at all; nay, we look away beyond our own land, even into countries where Christianity, as such, is unknown, and everywhere we see men and women doing kind, loving, beautiful, noble deeds,—just such deeds as Jesus always commended, just such deeds as we call Christian when we see them done by professing Christian people. We Unitarians take it, therefore, that they are in essence Christian deeds, and that pure religion and true Christianity are something native to the heart of man. Hence mankind cannot be by nature—as the Confession of Faith of at least two of the leading orthodox denominations of the country affirms—“dead in sin, wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body,” “made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil.” To say that is to contradict not only the best teachings of the Bible, but also the facts as they appear everywhere up and down the earth to every unprejudiced man’s eye.

Another doctrine that we Unitarians hold is, that the Bible is not one homogeneous book, with all its parts of equal value; but that it is a collection of a great many books, written at widely different times, and by different men, and for different purposes, and of different degrees of accuracy and authenticity; and that in the course of ages these books have drifted together in their present form, nobody knows just how; some of the books being taken up mainly with Hebrew genealogies and such things as could not possibly be of much value outside of the Jewish people; others of the books containing accounts and statements which our modern science tells us cannot possibly be correct, and which we are therefore obliged to cast out; while others again, like the Psalms, the

Book of Job, Isaiah, the Gospels, and some of the Epistles of Paul, are full of the very grandest and highest religious truths and inspirations which God has given to the race. So that we are to go to the Bible as to a gold-mine—not to declare that everything we find is alike gold; but to admit freely, as honest, candid investigation compels us to, that some of what we find is stone, and some earth, and some the quartz that holds the gold, while some—and a very large amount—is gold itself, precious and indestructible. This is what we, as Unitarians, hold about the Bible.

And why do we hold this, instead of the prevailing “orthodox” theory of the perfect infallibility of every part and word of the Bible? Simply because there is no alternative for us. We are obliged to hold this, or else shut our eyes and refuse to receive the light which science and scholarship are bringing to us.

Unitarians hold also a different doctrine about Revelation from what is generally held among other denominations. We hold that God has not revealed Himself simply once, and that in the distant past, but that He has been revealing Himself all the while since the beginning of human history, and is revealing Himself still—in the Bible, in other grand books of the ages, in human history, in all nature from blazing sun down to tiniest insect, in the mind and heart of man; and that as the ages go on, and science enlarges, and men reach higher and higher attainments in civilization and spiritual culture, He will reveal Himself more and more.

Another of our doctrines as Unitarians is, that inspiration is not something which can be locked up in a book, or confined to any age or people, but that it is a perpetual, ever-living thing, belonging to all

times and all peoples; that now, to-day, and here in America, just as truly as two thousand or three thousand years ago, or in Palestine, the Infinite Spirit of Wisdom, and Love, and Peace waits to come with its inspiration into every devout and earnest soul.

Another doctrine of ours is, that salvation is not something which can be transferred from one person to another, or that can be bought for us by any being outside of ourselves. Rather it is a thing of character and life, which every man must work out for himself. Virtue is salvation, vice is perdition. Every man is accountable for himself, and his guilt cannot be transferred to another. God cannot hold the whole human race guilty because of what Adam did—it is incredible. Nor if Jesus kept the laws of God never so perfectly, could it avail for any but himself. To be saved is not to accept some bargain, but to obey all the laws of one's being—physical, mental, moral, spiritual. Nor does such obedience insure a salvation in a far-off heaven merely. It is salvation here and now.

Another of our beliefs is, that "God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," and therefore that if He is kind to all His human children now, in this world, He will be not less kind to us in the next world. If He is the Father of us all here, He will be the Father of us all there, and nothing can ever pluck us out of His hand or His heart.

Other doctrines we hold differing to a greater or less extent from those of the sects about us, but these that I have mentioned are the principal ones. These give perhaps as good an idea as it is possible for me to give, of what it is that we stand for as a body. As I have said, our central principle is, that the same God made our minds and commanded

them to think, that made our hearts, and commanded them to love and adore; and that no religion can possibly be true that does not stand the test of investigation, and whose divineness does not become all the more apparent by the pouring on it of all the light we can get. Science we believe to be as much the friend of true religion, as it is the enemy of false religion or superstition. Reason we believe to be of God, and not of the devil, and something not simply that we may, but that we must, exercise with reference to religion, or else be swamped in superstitions false as hell—calling themselves religion. And I have endeavored to show that all our doctrines about God, and Jesus, and the Bible, and revelation, and inspiration, and salvation, and the rewards and punishments of the next life, and every other subject of religious thought, grow directly out of this one great central principle of ours,—of, as Paul puts it, “proving all things, and holding fast that which is good;” or, as I have stated it in this discourse, “applying the scientific method” to all things, religion included.

So then we see that, though Unitarianism has no creed, and labors little for mere denominational aggrandizement, and did not set out in the beginning to be a sect or do the work of a sect at all, but rather to do a work of purification and reform which should reach all the sects, and draw them all alike away from their sectarianism toward what was larger, and finer, and more enduring, because more natural than any sectarianisms can ever be, still, because it set out upon its reforms animated and governed by a central principle, it arrived very soon at an essential unity of theological views,—a unity which it has always kept, and must always keep, because re-

ligion interpreted by reason, or religion submitted to the scientific method, leads necessarily, as we believe, to what are essentially these doctrines that I have set forth to-day.

Do you doubt that it does thus lead? Behold the proof of it right among the orthodox denominations themselves. Tell me, is the orthodoxy which we hear about us to-day the same thing as the orthodoxy which you and I used to hear, say even twenty years ago? Has there been no change? Have no doctrines been softened? Have none been allowed to fall into the background? Has there been no theological advance made? We all very well know that there has been a marked change, a marked theological advance made, within the past twenty years; and this, in spite of the most determined and persistent opposing efforts of the theologians, of the more narrow-minded and ultra "evangelical" preachers and editors of the various orthodox sects, and especially of the revivalists. In what direction has been the advance? It has been, every part of it, exactly in the direction of Unitarianism. However great the advance, by so much is the orthodoxy of this country to-day nearer Unitarianism than it was twenty years ago.

And why should it not be? Isn't this a scientific age? Isn't it an age of investigation? Isn't it an age that is unchaining reason, as no age before has ever done? Why, then, expect that any theological changes that might take place would be in any other direction than toward that particular theology which has come into existence as a rational theology—that particular theology which has grown out of the one great central idea of reason in religion?

And so, friends, as Unitarianism to-day looks for-

ward into the future, do you wonder that it is filled with a great hope ?

Not that our name, Unitarian, is something that must necessarily always last. I am disposed to think that it will not always last. For, really, that name is not adequate,—it is too narrow properly to designate the great movement and principles that we stand for. Correct so far as it goes: it does not go far enough; it is not broad enough; has too much of a sectarian look. That is the reason why we so often designate ourselves by that other somewhat broader name, Liberal Christians. The name which I myself prefer, because I think it describes us better than any other, is the name Rational Christians. However, names amount to very little in this world. The thing is what we want. And the thing which the name Unitarian, or Universalist, or Liberal Christian, or Rational Christian, or whatever other name may be employed means, *the thing* will not pass away; *that*, as knowledge increases, and science gets larger dominion, and civilization advances, and reason comes to be more and more the guide of men's lives, must become the inheritor of the future.

CHICAGO, July, 1876.

THE DESIRE FOR INFALLIBILITIES IN RELIGION.

“Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”—LUKE xii. 57.

SAYS Archbishop Whately: “There is a strong tendency in human nature to save itself from the trouble of inquiry and the uneasiness of doubt. We do not like to be left for a moment in uncertainty or suspense; we are impatient of the labor of examining things for ourselves; we are alarmed at the danger of mistake, and uneasy under the sense of personal responsibility; and so we are disposed beforehand to accept a guide in religion, who shall continually claim the power of conducting us with unerring skill, and who shall tell us that we have nothing to do but follow him.”

Unquestionably there is much truth in this. In the Christian church this tendency of the human mind has resulted in the setting up slowly through centuries of silent and almost unnoticed progress, of two infallibilities—an infallible Church (latterly with an infallible Pope at the head of it, as its high priest and oracle), and an infallible Book.

The theory of an infallible Church seems to have grown into completeness first. Indeed for many centuries this was the great and the only infallibility of Christendom. It had no serious rival until the German Reformation arose. Of this Reformation the

central idea was a new infallibility. Luther and his compeers said: "Down with an infallible church!" and with the rams of their religious zeal and fiery eloquence they mightily shook and fearfully breached its walls. But the final out-come of all was, not the destruction of the old, but a dividing of it, and a setting up of the new.

To-day Rome floats her banner of ecclesiastical and papal infallibility as defiantly as ever; while the great body of Protestantism, with at least equal external show of boldness and confidence, marches under the banner of an infallible Bible.

Concerning these two infallibilities it is perhaps hard for us to judge with perfect fairness. The Romanist usually sees nothing but error, and a dangerously wicked error in the one. The Protestant (I mean the orthodox Protestant) *as usual* sees nothing but error, and a wicked, dangerous error in the other. From the standpoint of either party then, holding to either form of infallibility, and consequently rejecting the other, it is evidently impossible to see clearly where the truth lies. It is only from a standpoint outside of either stockade and overlooking both, that correct views can be obtained. From such a standpoint I believe it will generally be seen that the Romanist's infallibility has on its side at least logic, and, as I have already intimated, priority of birth.

But my effort to-day will not be to draw any lines of comparison or contrast between the two, but to examine the idea that lies at the root of both—the abstract idea of external infallibilities of any kind. When we set up any standard of truth as infallible, what do we do? We simply decree that truth is just so high, so broad, so long, of such or such size and shape, and never shall be any higher or broader

or larger, or assume any other form. We do the same thing that the Chinese do when they confine their girls' feet in the unyielding shoes which will allow no growth. We do the same thing that the young man of eighteen would do if he should sit down and write out exactly his present knowledge, his present understanding of things, his present judgments, and then deliberately determine that this shall be his standard for all his life; he will never allow himself to entertain the thought either that he may possibly have been mistaken in anything, or that he has not reached, at this early age, the *Ultima Thule* of human knowledge and wisdom.

To claim that a church is infallible is to hold that a body of men have attained to knowledge so high that by no possibility can any future generation of men be able to see more clearly any truth, or judge more wisely concerning any measure, than they are able to do; in a word it is to hold that they have reached perfect, that is *infinite* knowledge. Reduced to its last analysis it amounts to this and nothing less than this.

On the other hand, to claim that a book is infallible, is to hold the same with reference to the book.

Let us inquire what the effect of this seeking for and reliance upon supposed infallibilities has been.

It has been just what one looking on and judging *a priori* would naturally conclude it must be, viz., to make book-worms; mere historians instead of seers; men faced backward instead of forward; rakers forever among dead men's bones; worshipers of a God of the dead, instead of a God of the living; intense conservatives even to bigotry; men intensely self-satisfied even to Phariseeism; habitual rejecters of anything new, no matter how much proof

there might be of its truth—that did not plainly coincide with the old fixed standards.

These, I say, are what one judging from beforehand would conceive to be the natural results of men's setting up for themselves some standard as infallible, and determining that everything should forever be measured by that.

And looking at the matter *historically* we find that just this *has been* in a striking manner the effect of the claim of infallible standards wherever that claim has been set up, whether among Christian or non-Christian peoples.

First. It *has* faced men backward; setting them looking in the direction of the childhood of the race for wisdom;—as singular a procedure as if middle-aged men and women of to-day should devote large portions of their time to laboriously studying the doings and sayings of their boyhood and girlhood, with the expectation of finding great stores of knowledge there; or, as if nations that have advanced furthest on the road toward civilization should go in a body and sit down as pupils at the feet of those nations that are a great distance back on the road.

Second. The claim of infallibility has tended ever to make men mere exegetes, and commentators, and scholastic, and historians; instead of seers, and discoverers, and original thinkers. Of course if all wisdom is wrapped up in the Vedas, then all that is left for anybody now to do is to study the Vedas. Of course if the Koran contains all, then the mine in which every wise man will dig will be not science, or philosophy, or literature, or nature, but the Koran. Of course if the Bible or the Church are the great depositories of wisdom on the earth—they and they alone authoritative and infallible—then the prime

want of mankind, the want incomparably greater than any other, is commentators and exegetes of the Bible and historians of the church.

So then we cannot wonder that so long as the doctrines of an infallible Church and an infallible Bible are held to, an enormously large proportion of the best intellect of Christendom, as well as of Brahmanistic, Buddhistic and Mohammedan countries, should in every age be turned in the channel of mere exegesis and comment on the past—raking among ashes, instead of rising and going forth to plant and nourish new life!

Third. The idea of infallible standards has tended to make men bigots and persecutors. Of course if certain men were infallibly right, then those opposed to them, or not walking with them, must necessarily be wrong. If they had the truth, and the whole truth, and the unchangeable truth, then all the world outside must be heretics and heathen. If they had the seal of God on their doctrines, and their institutions, and their procedures, of course the seal of Satan was on everything contravening. Hence the very natural conclusion that the right thing to do was to proselyte, and push conquests, and crush down opposers, even by star chambers and inquisitions. As long as the Infallible Book gave examples of the chosen people of other times wiping out God's enemies by the hundred thousand, by fire and sword, why should not their spiritual descendants and pupils—the chosen people of to-day—*also* wipe out God's enemies in the same way?

Or, so long as the Church was infallible, and could do no wrong, why not gratify itself by clenching its fists and punishing soundly those miserable heretics the Waldenses, and Hussites, and Protestants, for

their obstinate heresies, and those detestable Moorish and Saracen infidels for their devilish infidelity?

Thus it is that the doctrine of infallibilities has ever tended to make men bigots and persecutors. In the case of the Mohammedans we all see it and admit it at once; and yet it is no more true with reference to them, probably not *so* true, as with reference to Christians.

Fourth. This doctrine has closed the eyes of Christendom to an astonishing degree for centuries, to the whole range of moral and religious truth that we are beginning now to know as natural religion. Not until our modern thought had begun to chafe against the narrow bars of infallibilities, and make attempts to push out beyond to see what was to be discovered there, did it discern this magnificent realm of thought and truth. By natural religion I mean the religious and theological teachings of (1) physical nature through all its domain of fact and law, (2) of universal human experience, and (3) of the intuitions of the individual human soul.

I say this whole triple realm of truth has been sought out in almost the exact degree in which the infallibility of the Bible and Church has been doubted. So long as men felt that the *ipse dixit* of the Pope or a council or the author of one of the books of our Scriptures was sufficient, of course there was no inducement to go beyond and inquire what the constitution of nature said by laws and analogies; or what the voice of universal experience uttered as speaking through history or general literature; or what other religions of the world taught; or what the deep consciousness of the individual human soul declared.

But when doubt with reference to the sufficiency

and infallibility of the former arose, and a secret suspicion that there was land beyond their horizons, then the minds of men pushed out upon new seas, to discover these new continents. Thanks then to that "skepticism," so called, to that "infidelity," so branded, which has done so much to free the world from a tyranny so cruel and withering, and lead the race forward into a liberty so glorious in results of good.

I freely admit that there is *power* in the dogma of infallibility. The claim put forward by the supporters of this dogma that there is in it a sort of conservative power, which, in this age of violent thought agitation tends in a certain sense to keep men steady, I do not hesitate to admit. Unquestionably so long as you keep men believing in an infallible Church, or in an infallible Pope, or in an infallible Bible, they are in a sense anchored in belief. But anchored how?

To rot. Ships are not built to lie tied fast in stagnant waters, but to sail the seas. No more was the human mind intended to lie cable-bound in the back bays of superstition, but to sail the seas of thought and progress. While, therefore, I grant the conservative influence claimed for the doctrine of infallibility, I hold that it is only the conservative influence of all superstition and every form of ignorance. And shall we refrain from making efforts to banish any kind of darkness and superstitious error of the past, because it is conservative in its tendency, and because, so long as men are fettered of mind by it they are safe from danger of rushing into infidelity and mental anarchy? Referring to our figure of a ship again; as well might her owners keep her forever fastened to the wharf in the harbor, for fear if they loosed her cable, and set her forth upon the

waters she was made to breast, she might run out of her course or be wrecked in a storm.

Says Macaulay, "There is no remedy for the evils of liberty but liberty." This is as true in the thought world as in the social world. They who argue for the preservation of error on account of its safety, know not what they say. There is no safety but in truth. It should be taught calmly, candidly, conscientiously, often very gradually; but it should be taught.

To prove that the power which lies in the doctrine of infallibilities is only the power of all ignorance and superstition, observe where it is most manifest. Who are the firmest believers in infallibilities? As between Catholics and Protestants, the former confessedly are. Among Catholics, those who are mentally in the greatest bondage, are almost invariably the firmest adherents to it, while the more intelligent and free-minded revolt against it; as, witness the late ecumenical council in Rome, and the resulting Old Catholic movement of Döllinger and his colleagues. Again, among Protestants who are most inclined to infallibility theories, and cling most tenaciously to the dogma of verbal inspiration of the Bible? As a rule, the more ignorant, narrow-minded, and unprogressive.

The two great poles in the religious world are, on the one hand, a religion of absolute, external infallibilities. That finds its most logical and consistent embodiment to-day in Romanism. Toward that pole naturally drift ignorance, superstition, and mental indolence. The other pole of the religious world is Natural Religion. Natural religion finds its greatest teacher of the past—where if not in Jesus? and its best embodiment to-day—where if not in Unitarian-

ism or some form of liberal Christianity? Toward this naturally drift knowledge and mental activity. Orthodox Protestantism stands between the two and must go to pieces. Not in a day, nor in a century, but some time. The clearest and most prescient minds have long seen this. It is a stream whose waters tend ever to divide, one part flowing toward greater authority—a more complete and all-pervading infallibility than its genius will permit of, or than is found anywhere this side of Romanism—and the other part tending as strongly to flow toward a greater and more perfect liberty than is found anywhere short of Liberal Christianity, or Natural Religion. Hence, I say, the logical necessity of Orthodox Protestantism as we see it to-day, eventually passing away.

The time must eventually come also, when Catholicism will pass away. Not by any means so soon as in the case of Orthodox Protestantism, because it has no such double strain upon it. Though an error, Romanism is a logical consistency; whereas, Orthodox Protestantism is not only nearly as palpable an error as its rival, but it is at its very center a logical inconsistency. An infallible Bible, and the right of individual interpretation of that Bible, are principles which, in their nature, are as irreconcilable as fire and water. The granting of either one of them in its completeness logically destroys the other. So that Orthodox Protestantism carries in its own hands the beetle and wedge; nay, logically, with one of its hands it holds the wedge and with the other wields the beetle, which are eventually to sever it. On the other hand, Catholicism will not pass away until it is destroyed by the forces of truth and progress battling with, but ultimately overcoming, united, consistent, tough error.

No! we have no reason to believe that man was made to shut his eyes and walk blindly; or to trust himself to any guide outside of himself and the enlightening voices of God, which never since the world began spoke in so many ways or with so clear utterance to the race as they are doing to-day—will we but earnestly listen! Man was not made to be a bondman to any, even to his Creator Himself, but to be a freeman, walking ever with free volition where it seems best to him that he should go. True, he was made to obey, but it was to obey the commands of God speaking through conscience and reason, and through laws found out by his own searching. Nor was he made to shut up all his faculties but one, and receive truth through one only direction. Rather was he made like the creatures that St. John saw in the Apocalypse—only in a deeper sense—full of eyes within and without.

A hundred avenues of truth were opened to him. He was placed in a world whose whole history was the writing of God. He was surrounded with nature uttering God in ten thousand ways. His existence was so ordered that everything without and within him—everything with which he should come into contact in himself, and in others, and in the physical creation—should call upon him unceasingly to observe, to think, to investigate, to find out for himself ever better knowledge and wisdom, to let go the hand of authority upon which it would be so easy to lean, and to set out to walk bravely upon his own feet.

Man could be developed only by this process. Only thus could strength come to his thinking, clearness to his judgment, certainty to his moral convictions. So long as he is carried, or arbitrarily led, he remains a child. God did not wish him to remain

forever a child, but to grow to the strength of moral and spiritual manhood; therefore He gave him no crutches of infallibilities to lean upon. Instead of putting truth bare in his hand, in the form of an infallible book, or the dictum of an infallible church or pope, he chose rather to wrap it up; a portion in every rose leaf, and a portion in every star beam; a portion in the smile of infancy, and a portion in the sigh of age; a portion of it fresh and bright and life-giving in every object, everywhere he should turn. Himself also he chose not to reveal in some mere bodily form, as man seems so much to desire, but instead to enter with living presence into every part of His creation, from the human soul to the starry heavens, and forever with ten thousand voices to call man to come forth and touch the innumerable doors, waiting to fly open at his touch, to afford him a passage into the deepest and holiest arcana.

This I say was God's way of dealing with his human children;—a way that would make God become most to them, and nature become most to them, and life become most to them; because it would most conduce to their mental and spiritual development. This, and not the way of dwarfing authorities.

I know well there is an instinct within us that at first thought shrinks from this kind of dealing; that cries out for the certain at once, and chafes impatiently at all delay and uncertainty that enters anywhere into our human lives. The mother watching over her sick child, says, "Oh, for a physician or a medicine that will be sure to cure my child! I cannot bear this uncertainty." The young man standing at the branching ways of opening life, says, "Oh, that I knew with infallible certainty which one to choose, this or that! It is cruel that I must bear an uncertainty

that involves so much." The patriot who loves his country more than his own life, in the hour of national peril says, "Oh, why cannot the curtain lift? Why may I not be permitted to look into the future? Must I go forward on mere probabilities when so much is at stake for millions—for generations to come? Will not heaven for once speak to tell me what I may do to save the State? Must I strike with a vail over my eyes, not knowing what will come of it, salvation or ruin?"

And truly, friends, looked at in the light of these crisis times of life, it does seem hard that we are compelled to grope our way so darkly through life, with no infallible voice to speak to us out of the unknown, in answer to our sighs and cries. And yet notwithstanding all, I press the thought that it is best as it is; because it is by this very uncertainty—it is by being thus thrown upon ourselves, to seek, to try, to push out into the unknown, that men grow wiser and stronger and that nations advance.

The German philosopher and poet Lessing said, "If God should hold out truth to me in one hand and search for truth in the other, and bid me take my choice, I should reply—'Oh! God, with all reverence and humility I beg that thou wilt keep the truth, and give to me search after the truth.'"

I do not know as I should be willing to say as much as that, indeed I am very sure I should not; nevertheless, there is certainly a large element of wisdom in what Lessing says. There is a sense in which building the house is better than the house; earning money better than the money; getting knowledge better than the knowledge; *because*, such building, earning, getting, makes *us to be more*, and therefore more able to acquire and earn and build things greater and better still.

The child complains with bitterness that the horizon which he sees is uncertain, and runs ever away from him when he attempts to reach it. But the man rejoices that the horizon pushes back and back and back, and thus reveals unheard-of worlds that else lay hidden behind its rim.

But it is claimed that we must have a revelation of absolute infallibility, or else we are utterly adrift with reference to all the problems—nay, with reference to the very existence of the *next world*. Not at all! Not at all! No man can show any reason why we need to have an infallible revelation with regard to what is to take place a hundred or a thousand or ten thousand years hence, any more than with regard to what is to take place ten years or one year hence. Can't we trust God as well on the other side of the grave as on this? I am aware that a large part of Christendom have got themselves in the habit of thinking that to launch out upon eternity, without an infallible book revelation concerning it, is a most dreadful thing to contemplate; whereas, to launch out upon a new and unknown year or day, which may have in its hand in no inconsiderable measure the destinies of that eternity, without any infallible revelation concerning *it*, this is nothing. God would be cruel, men say, not to have given us a revelation of infallible certainty about the former, but they do not mind much, having no revelation concerning the latter. Now this is all wrong. It is simply a foolish way of thinking that men have got into—that for the most part they have been *preached* into.

I can imagine to myself a man working himself up into an awful fever of consternation because the year he is stepping out upon on January first, is blind and uncertain to him. I can imagine him soliloquizing

to himself, "How do I know but that the most awful calamities may befall me this year? My house may burn, my property may be swept away, my sons may turn drunkards, my daughters may die, I may have the hydrophobia, my wife may become insane. I do not know! It is an awful 'leap in the dark' I am taking in entering on this new year. Oh! why, if God is good, and cares for me, does he not let me see? does he not give me an infallible revelation beforehand of what is coming?"

I say I can imagine a man working himself up into a fever of consternation like this, over the fact that he has no certain out-look upon the year before him; or, for that matter, upon the day before him; for we none of us know what a day or an hour may bring forth. And such a course would be every whit as reasonable as it is for men to paint in the vivid colors that they do the awfulness of the condition of us all in the world to come, if you rob the Bible of its absolute infallibility.

The truth is, men have every reason to trust God; if for a day or a year, then for a thousand years and ten thousand times ten thousand. Has God brought us safely in life thus far? Has every day of our existence thus far come laden with unfailing goodness, though not announced fully beforehand? Do we expect that He will deal with us in much the same way throughout the rest of our earthly lives, though He has not revealed to us how? Then what reason have we for fear or distrust concerning the life to come? Will God be less kind there than here? If we have to go forth into the darkness of every new hour, and every new day, and every new year of all our lives without a sign of an authoritative revelation concerning these from God, and yet God always leads us with safety and

much blessing through them, why need we fear when death comes, to lie down in God's arms? Why not thus lie down as expectant and confident that all will be well beyond, as you lay down last night expecting that all would be well this morning? Could anything be more infallible than are God's wisdom and justice and paternity? And have we not more infallible revelation of these than mere words, by whomsoever penned, could ever make it?

The little child may well say on moving-day, "My father and mother, who have loved me so well and cared for me so faithfully in the old home, I know will love me and care for me also in the new home to which they are taking me." So we may say, certainly with equal confidence, of God, our Father, on the great moving-day of death. Indeed it is faithlessness to doubt or say otherwise, though the home to which we go be one that our eyes have never seen.

Says Dr. Chapin, "To me there is something thrilling and exalting in the thought that we are drifting forward into a splendid mystery—into something that no mortal eye has yet seen, and no intelligence declared." And truly why should there not be something thrilling and exalting in such a thought, when we know that that mystery is planned and presided over by the Infinite Wisdom and the Infinite Goodness?

Oh! friends, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Out of the dead grain comes forth a higher and more manifold life.

So, as it were out of the seed-corn of the old external infallibilities dead, there waits to rise a new infallibility that transcends book and pope and council, that lives and asserts itself forever in the soul of

man—the infallibility of confidence and trust in Him “with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning;” who in due time, as we are prepared for the revelation, will make known to us all things that we long to know; and who, until that time, alike in this world and the next, will guard us and all our interests with a Father’s strength and love.

A PLEA FOR REASONABLE TREATMENT OF THE BIBLE.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.”—ACTS xvii. 11.

DR. CHANNING has said: “As Unitarians our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this: That the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that the meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books.”

If its meaning is not to be sought in the same manner as that of other books, can any one tell in what manner it is to be sought?

For years, in the class-rooms of theological teachers and in the books of theological writers who opposed Channing's idea, and would set up some rule for studying and interpreting the Bible different from that which they would set up regarding other books, has it been my lot earnestly to seek that different rule; but I have never been able to find any such rule, which, fairly carried out, did not make of the Bible, if not an absolute chaos and collection of nonsense, at least a thing of wax, which the reader could mold into any fashion of doctrine or teaching he chose—Calvinism, Arminianism, Swedenborgianism, Universalism, Spiritualism, Adventism, Catholicism, Unitarianism, or literally any-

thing else under the sun. I do not know how any thoughtful man who has examined the subject can fail of the conviction that it is this idea that the Bible is to be interpreted somehow differently from other books—according to some peculiar canons of interpretation applicable nowhere else—that has done more than almost anything else to turn the Old and New Testaments so literally into a vast theological fish-pond, where a man, by changing his bait, or throwing in his hook a little deeper or a little shallower, or in a little different place, may catch about any kind of doctrinal fish he pleases. I do not mean to deny that some of the difficulty which has been experienced in arriving at uniformity of views regarding the Bible, lies in the nature of the Bible itself—in the fact that it is made up of so many independent parts written in times so far separated from each other, by such a variety of authors, and for so widely different purposes. Doubtless some of the difficulty does lie here. It would be strange indeed, if, in a collection of literature so extensive and heterogeneous, there should not both seem to be and really be, some diversity of ideas and sentiments. However, I do not think it is here that the greatest difficulty arises. The main difficulty it seems to me lies in the strange notion which has been so widely prevalent in Christendom for so many generations, that the Bible is not to be studied and understood as other books are to be studied and understood, but that, when men approach it, they must hold their reason in abeyance, and adopt canons and methods of interpretation which they would never dream of applying anywhere else.

In setting out to inquire how to study the Bible, then, I plant my feet unhesitatingly at the outset

upon this dictum of Channing, that "the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that the meaning is to be sought in the same manner precisely as that of other books."

However, this, though an answer to our question, and as I conceive a true answer, is nevertheless not enough. It is too general. We want an answer a good deal more specific—going a good deal more into details and practical applications. Let us seek such practical and detailed answer.

1. The Bible, as any other book which we would get much good from, we should study *with sympathy and appreciation*. Of course it is possible for a person to begin the study of a book prejudiced against it, and yet in the end arrive at a very just appreciation of it, and get much valuable return from his study. However, as a rule, it will not be so. As a rule we are apt to find about what we look for in books as well as in men. Prejudiced against a man or a book, we shall see all faults; the best that is in either we cannot see. Hence the value to us of others' recommendations of a book we are going to read or study. Hence, too, the advantage we have in reading famous books. We come to them prepared to find them good. As we go forward with our reading or study, instead of having a part, and oftentimes a very considerable part, of our mental energy dissipated in half fears that we are not doing wisely in reading our book, and in trying to make up our minds whether it is really a valuable book or not, and if valuable, how valuable, we have all our energy of mind and feeling left us to put into appreciation, enjoyment, gathering up of treasures from the pages as we go on.

One of our celebrated poets sends a poem to a lead-

ing monthly without attaching his name to it. It is rejected and forgotten. Some time after he sends the same poem over his own name, to the same magazine. It is accepted readily, and pronounced by both editor and public to be one of the author's best. Why does the editor see the poem with so different eyes the second time? Because the author's name attached prepared him before he begins reading to appreciate what he reads, whereas in the other case the anonymous character of the production has afforded him no such preparation. This illustrates what I mean when I say that if we would study the Bible in a way to make it most valuable to us, we need to enter on our study not hostile or cynical or prejudiced or even indifferent, but in a spirit of positive expectancy, sympathy, appreciation; just as we need to enter upon the study of any other book or thing.

2. We should study the Bible *systematically and comprehensively*, as we would any other book. A very common, indeed I may say, an almost universal defect in the study of the Bible, is desultoriness, fragmentariness, studying it by detached bits, without ever getting, or in most cases ever attempting to get, any adequate idea of the relation of its parts to each other—what writers in it speak with authority, and what are only the echoes of a voice; what books of it are great books, of universal interest to the race, and of permanent value, and what are only of local and temporary importance; what truths in it are central truths, seed truths, truths for all time and all men, and what are only for the particular age and nation and state of society which give them birth. Sunday-schools have always been greatly at fault in this matter. They have forever

busied themselves with teaching their pupils texts of Scripture culled from here and there, and commenting upon the minutiae of Bible teachings and events, and almost never have attempted anything in the way of broad and comprehensive work. So, too, the common way of reading the Bible consecutively, or in the order of the books, contributes to make our knowledge of it fragmentary and unrelated; for of course every one is aware that the arrangement of the different books as they now stand in our Bibles is about as hap-hazard and unsystematic as could be;—prose, poetry, legend, biography, history, prophecy, and epistles following each other with only the smallest showing of order or sequence. Then again our universal habit as preachers, of preaching from detached texts, tends doubtless to promote the same fragmentariness in people's ideas of the Bible. Finally, the common notion of the infallibility of the Bible has contributed probably more than anything else to the same end. If all parts of the Bible are equally inspired, and all are infallible revelations from God, why of course it makes little difference what we read or where we read in the Bible, whether in the Chronicles, the Psalms, the Gospels or the Apocalypse; since every verse, any way, is a heavenly pearl of more value than we can ever find out. Never, only as men come to understand that the books of the Bible came from widely different sources, representing widely different degrees of inspiration, and are themselves of widely different importance, can really broad and comprehensive study of the Bible become a possibility.

3. We should study the Bible, as we should any other book, *in the constant light of reason and common sense*. What are reason and common sense given to

man for if not to use? And if he ought to use them anywhere, why not in the most important things? I suppose it is impossible to deny the general proposition, that just in the degree that we fail to be governed by our reason and common sense we degrade ourselves toward the brutes which we stigmatize as unreasoning, and just in the degree that we follow our reason and shape our lives according to its teachings we rise into true manhood. Why in relation to religion should there be a reversal, and a man here be commended for holding his reason in abeyance—a procedure which in relation to everything else degrades him? No! The truth evidently is, if religion be the most important concern of the race, then there is nothing in regard to which the race should use their reason so constantly and carefully and thoroughly as in regard to religion; and if anywhere a man may shut the eyes which God has given him, at least it must not be here. We may study our geometries, our astronomies, our Bacons, our Platos, our Shakespeares, if we will, with chains upon our reason; but when we come to study our Bible and our books of religion—those books which have to do with the highest interests of our being, then as we care for those highest interests, and as we would honor the God who gave us our reason, we must strike off the chains.

4. Once more, we should study the Bible as any other book, *in connection with any and all helps which we may be able to get, and in the light of the best culture of the time.*

It seems hard for men to realize how generally partial seeing is false seeing, and partial views are worthless, if not worse than worthless, views. Particularly does it seem difficult for Christian men to

realize this with reference to the Bible and religion. The old adage warns us to beware of the man of one book. For myself, I have never been able quite satisfactorily to make out what that means. Perhaps it may have either one of two or three meanings. But I am convinced that the sense in which it has the deepest significance is this: Beware of the man of one book in much the same way that you would beware of a mule that knows nothing only to go on in its own stupid way and balk or kick when you try to get it to go in a better. If there is anything in this world that will make narrowness, if there is anything that will make bigotry, if there is anything that will make egotism, it is one book; and all the same whether that one book be the Bible or any other. As well talk of knowing the Alps when you have only wandered up a single ravine; or the world when you have only explored a single city; or botany when you have analyzed only a single plant, as to talk about knowing truth and religion in any but a narrow and partial and altogether imperfect sense, by studying them in any one book or through any one channel. Granted that the ravine up which you have wandered in the Alps equals or surpasses any other in beauty, picturesque, grandeur; or that the city you have explored is the largest and most important in the world; or that the flower you have analyzed is the best existing type of the largest and most extended floral family on the globe; yet that does not alter the case at all. One flower isn't botany, one ravine isn't the Alps, one city isn't the world. And what is more, you cannot understand even that one flower itself in any but the meagerest and most utterly inadequate way, unless you have studied vast numbers of other flowers; nor

that one single ravine, unless you have studied many other, not only ravines, but mountain ranges and geological formations; nor that one city, unless you have studied carefully and laboriously other cities and other civilizations. So, to a proper understanding of religious truth—nay, to a proper understanding of the Bible itself—there is needed a knowledge of a great many other books and a great many other things besides the Bible.

And I bear upon this point, not simply because there is much popular misconception concerning it, but because, what is worse, this misconception is being systematically and persistently promulgated by a very large class of just now very popular religious teachers. The whole class of revivalists and lay preachers of the day, as well as those regular preachers who especially rejoice in the name “evangelical,” are, almost to a man, stout promulgators of this idea. “The Bible,” they cry; “the Bible, just as it reads, without note or comment,” (except the shallow and ridiculous comments which they themselves all the while flood it with) “is the one thing needful, the one fountain of perfect and sufficient truth.” You can hardly listen to a discourse from one of these men without being summoned from one to fifty times to hear what God says. They know all about that. And what is it that God says? It is something that they have found in, or, quite as likely, put into, some fragment of Scripture which they have fished out of some one of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, or thirty-nine of the Old. At best they have got a drop of water under a microscope; and they declare, in the name of all that is high and holy, that it is the ocean. At best they have got a bit of bark, or a bud, from the tree of God’s

truth, and they beg of you, with strong pleadings and tears, to accept it from them as the whole tree.

The most conspicuous of this class of men just now, of course, is Mr. Moody. His discourses, as you all know, are principally made up of texts culled from here, there, and anywhere from Genesis to Revelation (as all alike the infallible word of God), heated to a white heat in his own vivid imagination and glowing feeling, and then poured out upon his hearers with a molten mass of accompanying comment, anecdote, and exhortation. He insists upon bringing everything to the test of the Bible, according to this microscopic way of looking at the Bible. That is to say, if you have what you regard to be truth, and bring it forward, the proof of it must be, Can you match it with some Bible text, or "thus saith the Lord"? (in much the same way that you might lay down a cent and I might match it with another cent). If you can, there is no further appeal. Mr. Moody is undoubtedly as thoroughly a man of one book as any at all eminent man of this age. And this he glories in. He tells us that he made a great mistake in his earlier years of preaching in not confining himself exclusively enough to one book, the Bible. And the true way to study the Bible, he urges, is not to study it in the light of reason, or science, or culture, or the outside helps which come through the broad scholarship of the times, and through the other religions or religious books of the world, but it is, to study it simply in its own light. If a passage of Scripture puzzles you, find a parallel passage; probably this will give you light. If it does not, find another, and another. If no light comes from these, carry it to God in prayer, and then light will certainly come.

Now certainly, in an age of enlightenment like ours, this kind of religious teaching is melancholy enough to contemplate, even when coming to us from Mr. Moody, or any of our lay preachers, or professional revivalists. What then shall we say when we see the same coming from sources a great deal higher—from pastors of great city churches and editors of leading religious papers? It is only a few months since I read a lengthy essay given by one of the most noted ministers in Boston, before a ministerial gathering in that city, in which he came out in the most emphatic terms in favor of all this kind of thing. He declared that no sermon ought ever to be preached which was not drawn from the Bible direct; and no preacher in preparing a sermon ought ever even to refer to any book outside of the Bible and Webster's Dictionary. And this utterance is only one of hundreds of similar import, coming to us even from directions where we should little expect the re-appearance of such out-grown ideas. Indeed, it seems as if men who had grown a few years ago ashamed to avow such sentiments, have, since the furor created in the public mind by Mr. Moody, been emboldened to reassert them. The revivalism of England and this country of the past two or three years seems to have been a great wave to push the Christian world back from the enlightenment and breadth of thought to which it was advancing, toward the old narrowness and unreason; and in nothing more plainly so than in this matter of study and interpretation of the Bible.

Matthew Arnold has well said that the man of one book, "the man of no range in his reading, must almost inevitably misunderstand the Bible, cannot treat it largely enough, must be inclined to treat it

all alike, and to press every word. For, on the one hand, he has not enough experience of the way in which men have thought and spoken, to feel what the Bible writers were about, to read between the lines, to discern where he ought to rest with his whole weight, and where he ought to pass lightly; while, on the other hand, the void and hunger in his mind, from lack of aliment, almost irresistibly impels him to fill it by taking literally and amplifying certain data which he finds in the Bible, whether they ought to be so dealt with or no." "To understand that the language is fluid, passing, literary, not rigid, fixed, and scientific, is the first step toward a right understanding of the Bible. But to take this very first step some experience of how men have thought and expressed themselves is necessary, and this is culture." "Culture, therefore—knowing the best that has been thought and known in the world, and moreover, the power, through reading, to estimate the proportion and relation in what we read," this is a thing of the very first importance in Scripture interpretation and study.

So, then, let us beware of the man of one book. Let us see to it that we neither become ourselves persons of one book, nor accept any one else as fitted at all to be a guide to us in the understanding of important things, who is a person of one book. Let us understand that he who understands but one book necessarily understands that poorly; and especially that this must be the case with such a book as the Bible.

Thus I come back once more to the statement with which I opened this division of my discourse: We must study the Bible as any other book, not simply with appreciation, and comprehensiveness, and

reason, but *also with all helps which we may be able to get, and in the light of the best culture of the time.* Nothing less than this is rational; certainly, nothing less than this can be pleasing to Him from whom all truth, alike inside Bibles and out, comes; and most certainly of all, nothing less than this can save the Bible from its enemies.

What do I mean? I mean that any other way of studying and interpreting the Bible than this, necessarily produces religious ideas so poor and narrow, so utterly out of harmony with the spirit of the time, and so inadequate to the wants of the time, that the best intelligence of the age, touching them, at once bounds back from them as a ball from the wall; and rebounding from them it will rebound also in large measure from the Bible, in which they claim to have their source and stronghold. It must be so, it can't be otherwise. Indeed, the very thing is actually going on already before our eyes, and long has been. The drift of the intelligence of the age away from the Bible, of which none complain more loudly than our evangelical friends, is not really a drift away from the Bible at all. Really, it is a drift away from the Bible as interpreted by the Christian church, *with the light of reason and culture shut out.* The Bible, interpreted according as reason, and common sense, and scholarship, and science—particularly the science of comparative religion—would interpret it if left untrammelled, the intelligence of the time would no more drift away from than it would drift away from itself. So that let us know that just in the degree that the intelligence of the age has gone off, and continues to go off, and in the future shall go off, from the Bible, just in that degree are our methods of Bible study and interpretation false and wrong, by

reason of their fragmentariness, their irrationality, their hostility to broad, unsectarian culture.

One question naturally suggests itself which ought to be answered before I close. It is the question: Is the kind of study and interpretation of the Bible which I urge safe, especially for the young? Is it not wisest—nay, is it not absolutely necessary, at least in Sunday-schools and in instructing our children in our own families, to fall back upon the old methods? If we undertake to teach the young the real truth about the Bible—how it came to be—the difference in age and authorship and value between different books—that there are things in it stated as truth which we, with our larger knowledge, know now not to be truth; and things taught or sanctioned as right which we know not to be right, shall we not find we are doing a very dangerous thing—a thing which will utterly unsettle them, make them reject the Bible entirely, and leave them without any religious beliefs, or even foundations on which to build religious beliefs?

I know there are persons who feel that such would be the case; and I confess that the time has been when I myself have felt the same. To have such a result come from our religious teachings would be something which I think few earnest and thoughtful persons could do otherwise than deeply and painfully regret. And certainly those of us who have ourselves sailed the wintry sea of doubt, and only after years of fierce storms and awful darkness found a morning land of hope and faith, we, at least, should shrink from a course that would launch the young about us, who trust us, and the children of our own homes, upon a deep so dark and drear and dangerous.

However, I, for one, am convinced that there is

little ground for apprehension in this direction. Indeed, I am convinced that the grounds for apprehension lie almost altogether on the opposite side. The course which I recommend, of dealing with the Bible honestly, instead of being the dangerous course to pursue with the young, is, in my judgment, the only safe course to pursue with them. And this conviction I have reached, not in a moment, but after some years of careful and earnest, and, I confess, almost anxious, study, observation, and practical experience with this method. I have found that honest teaching makes honest and candid pupils; thoughtful and sincere and earnest teaching makes thoughtful and sincere and earnest pupils. Whereas, teaching tinctured at all by pretense or make-believe, or in any respect other than downright honest and sincere, in the long run defeats the very object had in view by the teacher, making the pupils suspicious of the teacher, and suspicious of the things taught, and eventually impelling them to the very skepticism which the teacher foolishly thought to save them from by his evasions and make-believes. So that whereas I would never parade before the young any inaccuracy of statement, or indelicacy of language, or erroneous moral precept or example found in the Bible, yet at the same time I would never cover up these things or say they were not; and when I came to things in the Bible which I could not satisfactorily explain I should honestly say so; while all the time and in every way in my power I should be steadily endeavoring to teach those under my charge just what the true value of the Bible consists in, as distinguished from those things which do not affect its real and permanent value at all. And thus I should feel sure that I was doing

the best thing that could possibly be done to make my pupils not skeptics but believers—believers whose belief would be firm and abiding because built upon foundations well laid—not rejectors and contemnners of the Bible, but accepters, prizers, lovers, reverers of the Bible for its own worthy sake.

Seldom does my heart ache as it aches when I think of the vast army of children and youth all up and down this thinking land who are being steadily, week after week, year after year, taught in churches and Sunday-schools and homes such ideas about the book I love as I know will not stand the test of coming times. For I look forward only a little while and see thousands of the more thoughtful of them coming to the point where, under the clearer light and broader intelligence which they are sure to reach, they cannot possibly believe any longer what they have been taught—the point where they will see that the Bible is not the book they thought it was; that it does not rest upon the foundations which they supposed supported it. What will they do when that time comes? I earnestly ask the question.

Well, there will be three classes of them, and what they will do will depend upon which of the three classes they happen to belong to. If they belong to the first class, of dishonest, or timid, or time-serving people, they will go on carrying in their hearts a secret and very likely growing skepticism, but appearing outwardly to believe as they always did, and filling places more or less punctiliously in the old churches of their fathers.

If they belong to the second class, of intellectually honest persons, but rather impetuous and not very fully developed on the side of the intuitional and the spiritual, and especially if they are so situated that

they must take stands without being able to get time to investigate thoroughly, they will rush off on a tangent of open skepticism and infidelity, and nobody can predict where they will finally draw up.

If they belong to the third class of persons, who, in addition to being thoroughly honest, are also earnest and measurably self-poised, and of naturally deep religious intuitions, and withal so situated as to have time and helps and encouragements, they will enter upon a mental and spiritual battle, which they will fight and fight and fight, in hope and fear and sometimes almost despair, with study and investigation and eager running after light in a hundred different directions, and such bitter prayer as no one who has not felt the very foundations of things giving way under him knows anything about, until, at last, after months, or more likely years, they will gain a hard-won but most precious victory, and for the rest of their lives have rest in a faith incomparably broader and richer than they have ever known;—a faith that keeps every spiritual thing, and that keeps the Bible—no longer now, it is true, precisely the same book as before, but yet a book that is none the less dear, none the less helpful, none the less inspired, none the less of God.

I say of the vast armies of children and youth about us, who are being taught in church and Sunday-school and home to study the Bible in the old way, on the old infallibility basis, thousands on thousands will sooner or later come to the point where they will find the old foundations gone, and themselves borne on an unseen tide to a place in one of these three classes which I have described.* If we could be sure that all would find themselves in the third class, terrible as is the ordeal which they would have before them ere the final victory comes, still we

might with some reason say, "It is well; let it so be." But when we reflect that this third class (of those who will reach ultimate faith and rest) must of necessity be almost infinitesimal as compared with classes one and two (of those who will land in ultimate skepticism or hypocrisy) then how is the matter changed! and how scarcely less than fearful does it become to think of going forward to teach the young those unreasonable notions about the Bible, and those false methods of interpreting the Bible, which in the increasing intelligence of the time must sooner or later break down with so disastrous consequences to those who hold them. No, friends; the safe thing and the only safe thing is, for us to go forward as best we can to find out the truth about the Bible and religion, as about everything else; and when we get it, cherish it sacredly in our heart's holiest place; moreover, not fearing to speak it to others, or teach it to our children. Only let us be careful, especially in our teaching it to children, that we do so always *reverently*. If we are reverent, our children and the young whom we teach will catch the reverence from us. And let us be sure that if we can but succeed in making them not simply honest and sincere, but also reverent, seekers after the truth, all will be well. The Bible can never suffer—nothing that is from God can in the long run suffer from honest, sincere, reverent hands.

I have protracted this discussion longer than I intended. My excuse is the importance—the as yet by any of us only faintly realized importance—of this great subject, which is every day coming more and more squarely to confront the whole Christian world: How, in the matter of study and interpretation, shall we treat the Bible? Shall we treat it reasonably? or shall we treat it unreasonably?

THE SUCCESS OF MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”—1 THESS. v. 21.

THE two noted revivalists, who are reputed to have achieved such remarkable success in Great Britain and three of the great eastern cities of this country, have just promised (under certain conditions) to hold a series of revival meetings the coming autumn in Chicago. The probability of their appearance here naturally suggests some inquiry about this matter of their success.

I wish to ask two questions: (1.) How great has been their success? (2.) What are the grounds or causes of that success?

1. How great has been their success? I answer: As success is commonly measured, doubtless considerable; though I think careful investigation will show us by no means as great as has been claimed, or as is probably generally supposed.

We can pursue our inquiry better concerning the meetings in England than concerning the meetings held in this country, because more time has elapsed since the close of the former, and therefore the wheat of permanent result has had a fuller opportunity to separate itself from the chaff of mere transitory excitement.

In *The Boston Congregationalist* of October 7, 1875,

there appeared an article over the name of John T. Dexter, and dated London, England, September, 1875, which contained these very remarkable declarations: "The return of Messrs. Moody and Sankey to their native country has been followed on this side by an entire cessation of the movement they so vigorously conducted, and which it was resolved by the leave-taking conference of London ministers to be of the highest moment to continue." "The revival has, in the metropolis, altogether passed from sight and memory, in the brief interval elapsing since the departure of the revivalists." "I have serious doubts whether all ordinary Christian efforts will not be crippled by the withholding of funds by those who have subscribed (or will say they have) toward the cost of the revival."

These are startling words to appear in an article printed in leaded type on the first page of a stanch orthodox sheet.

But, further, some time after the departure of Moody and Sankey, a meeting of preachers was held in London, to discuss the question, "What has the revival left us?" Many facts and opinions came to light quite as startling as anything written by Mr. Dexter. The first speaker said: "By going the whole round of the churches we should find that there is an expectation that has not yet come." "How pained I was," proceeded the speaker, with emphasis, "when I read in *The Christian World* the other day how few there were at the noon prayer-meeting in London, and that the requests for prayer had dwindled down to such a small number compared with what they were when Messrs. Moody and Sankey were with us. If it were right to send special requests for prayer while the evangelists

were here, what has changed the necessity and right to send them now, even should there be only ten or twenty persons there to plead?" The second speaker declared boldly "that the revival had not reached the outside masses of the people." The third speaker affirmed that the masses "were left to-day just where they were before the evangelists came to England." Not only was there a disappointment at the failure to reach the masses, but "where," asked the speaker, "are the conversions we expected and talked about?" "His church was situated about midway between the Agricultural hall (where the meetings of Moody and Sankey were held) and the Bow Road hall, and they expected a large increase of church membership. They had only five applications for admission to the church, and three out of the five regularly attended his own services in Shoreditch hall. So far as he could gather from the churches in the north of London, around the Agricultural hall, instead of being an increase there was *an actual decrease in the membership* since the services in that quarter."

But we need not remain on the other side of the sea; similar testimonials are beginning to come to us with regard to the meetings held in our own great cities in the east. Living, as I did at the time, in Northfield, Mass., where Mr. Moody held his first series of meetings after his return to this country, I know that the real results achieved there came vastly short of what was reported in the papers. And I am not aware of any reason why we may not suppose that the accounts which we have received of the results of the meetings in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and New York have been equally exaggerated. But we are not left to conjecture; as

I have said, testimony is beginning to come to us with regard to the matter. The New York correspondent of *The Boston Journal* writes (as quoted in *The Christian Register*) that a somewhat similar disappointment as that experienced by the people in London is now burdening the hearts of "evangelical" Christians in New York and Brooklyn. The first Sunday of May is the time for gathering in the religious harvest of the winter's work. "Large additions were made to the churches last Sabbath," writes *The Journal* correspondent, "*but by no means as large or as general as usual.*" The Hippodrome movement is responsible for this. That has diverted and turned aside church labor, and by its attractiveness has made religious work a sort of recreation, where crowds, the singing, and the exhilaration have drawn attention away from the usual church work in the different parishes." The writer then gives reports of conversations with representative men of some of the largest churches, who confirmed these statements. When he said to the leading man of Dr. Talmage's Tabernacle, "You were very fortunate in having the Moody and Sankey prayer-meetings in your church," the reply was: "That may be; but out of our large additions *only two have been traced directly to those services.*"

From such testimonies as these it is not hard to draw an answer to our first inquiry: How great has the success of the evangelists, whose names have been on everybody's lips, really been? If by success we mean notoriety, or the attracting of great crowds, then extraordinary success they have certainly achieved. But if by success we mean the accomplishment of a work whose results are at all permanent—a work which has really added to the sum

total of the religious achievements in the countries where the evangelists have labored, then, as we have seen, even according to the testimony of their friends and well-known pastors of prominent evangelical churches in the immediate neighborhood of the meetings held, the results attained are more than doubtful. In other words, it seems very questionable whether the number of persons who have been "converted," and who have joined the various orthodox churches of New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and Great Britain during the evangelists' labors, has really been as great *as it would have been if the evangelists had stayed at home, and the churches had gone on in their usual channels of effort.* While the amount of powder burned and smoke made certainly has been very great, the real execution done seems to foot up unexpectedly small. This I say on the low plane of numbers of converts and church members made. But, when we come to step up on a still higher plane than that, and question this whole system of things, this whole matter of convert making, and query whether as a rule people are not quite as much harmed as benefited by the operation which is commonly called conversion, and whether there are not evils incident to all such conversion campaigns as Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey have been carrying on, which are more deep and lasting than the good accomplished can possibly be, then the answer to the question whether these gentlemen have really succeeded in any high or worthy sense comes out into very clear light.

2. But to go forward to our second question : How shall we account for such success as they have achieved ?

Of course we are all aware that it was claimed

from the beginning by the friends of this Moody and Sankey movement that its so-called success—that is, the crowds that it attracted and the number of so-called converts it made—was a proof that it was a genuine work of God. Nothing but the power of the Holy Ghost, it was confidently asserted, could have wrought such results as were seen wrought. The one all-sufficient explanation of the whole thing was its divine nature.

For one, I do not think such explanation has any validity ; and for what seem to me the strongest reasons. Any one who has read history at all knows that drawing crowds and making converts is one of the commonest things in the world ; that it is not confined to men whom any of us would call God's chosen ; indeed, that many of the men, in both past and present, who have had, and now have, the most power to draw multitudes after them and make converts of the same, have been either notoriously bad men, or else men advocating exceedingly superstitious and harmful doctrines. The Mormon movement has had a remarkable success, so far as the number of converts it has made is concerned. The Millerite, or Second Adventist, movement of thirty or forty years ago was very successful in the amount of following it got. The Crusades were tremendous revivals, by the side of which this movement of Moody and Sankey is scarcely as a rushlight to the noon sun. Three or four years ago a great Roman Catholic revival sprung up in France and other countries of Europe, accompanied by immense and most imposing pilgrimages to the reputed miracle-working shrines of Paray le-Monial and Lourdes. And the papers tell us that now great Mohammedan revivals, some of them more wonderful than Mr. Moody's, are going on

in both India and Arabia. There is a famous revival preacher now in Mecca, who draws throngs of followers from as far off as Turkey, and northern Africa, and Hindostan, including royal personages. His converts are said to be numerous, and some so zealous and devoted as to throw themselves under the hoofs of his horse.

So that if we are going to argue that a movement is of God because it gets crowds of followers and converts, we are irresistibly driven by our logic a good deal further than our evangelical friends will be willing to go, viz.: we are driven to the conclusion that all these movements that I have mentioned—Mormon, Roman Catholic, and Mohammedan—are also, and indeed more still, of God, for they have found followers and converts in vast crowds—some of them in crowds so great as to sink any of our modern Protestant revivals, Moody and Sankey's, or any others, quite into insignificance.

No! it is clearly not necessary to bring in any supernatural agency to account for the success achieved by our evangelists. If movements greater than theirs—Mormon, Mohammedan, and Catholic—can be accounted for on purely natural grounds, certainly we may, with very good reason, look for natural and purely human explanations for all that they have accomplished.

Very well then, definitely, what shall we say the secrets of their success, such as it has been, are?

I think the honesty and sincerity of the men have had, unquestionably, something to do with it. Religious men are seldom found who give evidence of more sincerity than does Mr. Moody. And in these days of insincerity that is a good deal. People, as a rule, have gone a good way toward pinning their

faith to a man, when once they have made up their minds that he is really sincere and honest.

Again, Mr. Moody is a man of warm nature, large heart, ready sympathy with the poor and tempted—qualities which attract men to him, as they always attract men to whomsoever possesses them.

Again, he is a man of most extraordinary power to believe. He seems to be able really to believe anything. Apparently, nothing can possibly stagger him, or cause him to hesitate a moment about receiving it as infallible truth, if only it be found in the Bible or falls in with the general line of his ideas. He finds no difficulty whatever in believing that the whale swallowed Jonah: seemingly, he would find no more difficulty, if that were the way the story read, in believing that Jonah swallowed the whale. As another has said, “He out-Herods all rivals in the extent and intensity of his believing not only ‘the old, old story,’ but all the old, old stories of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Such extraordinary aptitude and capacity for believing things has scarcely been witnessed in our age. Believing is his science, his culture, his gospel, his way of salvation, his heaven of enjoyment.” And now, who does not know that there is great power in such ability to believe as this? Whether it is a good or a bad power is not the question; but who doubts that it is a great popular power? Napoleon’s firm belief in his Star of Destiny unquestionably did much to kindle the faith of others in him, and to enable him to hew his way up and down Europe and to the throne of France. Loyola’s and Xavier’s mighty and unwavering belief in Catholicism doubtless did much to help them make their extraordinary conquests for the Mother Church.

So, Mr. Moody’s power of believing is undoubtedly

no small part of the secret of his success. The age is full of doubt and inquiry. Many, weary with inquiry, or, what is much more often the case, afraid of inquiry, find great comfort in coming into contact with a man who knows nothing about doubt, and who simply pushes inquiry out of the way as something of the devil; who believes, and believes intensely, and believes all the while. It is always easier to close eyes than to open them. A hundred men can always be found to follow one who goes forth calling upon men to believe, where ten cannot be found to follow one who goes forth bidding men investigate.

Again, Mr. Moody is a man of absolutely tremendous earnestness. His whole nature and make-up, as well as his training, conspire to make him such. Physically he is strong and stout. His head large, particularly at the base, is set upon a thick, short neck, and this upon broad shoulders. His mind is keen, practical, intense, narrow. His culture is crude; his range of reading very limited. His will is imperious. What could such a man be, when he had once chosen to devote himself to religion, but a zealot? And a zealot of great power! A man of one burning idea! Most men are weak and vacillating, and easily, nay, rather gladly, fall into the lead of a man of strong purpose. The very narrowness and want of culture of Mr. Moody, and his inability to see on many sides of a subject, coupled with his great self-confidence and strength of will, conspire to make him, though on a low plane, a born leader of men.

Finally, Mr. Moody has certainly great popular gifts as a speaker. Though not in the common acceptance of the word an orator, yet he speaks always

with great fluency, vigor, directness, fervency, power. All these traits and characteristics of the man go far toward accounting for the excitement which he has been able to create since he began his tour of Great Britain three years ago.

But these are not all. Significant as these are, they only make up a part of the full explanation. There are at least two other very important agencies that I want particularly to speak of. These are, first, the music employed, and second, the shrewd business management of the meetings, especially in the way of advertising them, and securing beforehand the enormously powerful backing of the churches.

First, *the music*. We often hear it said that it is Mr. Sankey's singing more than it is Mr. Moody's preaching that draws. But a statement of this kind shows a want of appreciation of where the greatest power of the music of the Moody and Sankey meetings lies. It does not lie in Mr. Sankey's solos. These are effective, and contribute not a little to the attractiveness of the exercises. And, indeed, I suppose that we in this country can hardly realize how entirely novel a thing they were in Great Britain when the evangelists went there, and, therefore, how much they must have done, at the outset, to bring the two Americans into popular notice. Yet I insist that the greatest power of the music of the great meetings held has not lain in Mr. Sankey's singing. It has lain in the sweeping, surging, irresistible, overwhelming singing of the congregations. Do you know what power there is in the singing of the negroes at the South when, gathered in great congregation, they all unite with one heart and voice in their simple but thrilling choruses? They will sing themselves into ecstasies, so that they scarcely know

whether they are in the body or out of the body. And you, too, though you have only gone in as an indifferent and critical spectator, before you know it you too are drawn into the enchanted current, and are being borne with strange intoxication on the bosom of the wild but wondrous song. Something of the same power of popular singing some of us have witnessed in old-fashioned Methodist revivals. The congregation would sing, and swell the stirring choruses of their stirring hymns, until it seemed as if the roof would rise, and all the people with it; until the emotions of the congregation were stretched to the utmost tension, and all felt as if they were standing in the very presence of the glories or the horrors of the next world.

Now, Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey have availed themselves to an extraordinary degree of the power there is in the united singing of large masses to sway human feeling. In the first place, they have compiled a collection of hymns and tunes of the most popular possible character, almost every hymn having a chorus that an audience will quickly catch, and every tune being of a kind that will almost sing itself. You know how certain songs, like "Home, Sweet Home," or "John Brown's Body," or even "Shoo Fly," have power to catch the popular ear, and before any one is aware get into everybody's mouth, over the whole length and breadth of a country. Moody and Sankey succeeded in making up a collection of hymns and tunes which had much of that same indescribable element of popularity in them. Most of them had already become popular in this country, and when taken to England they at once became immensely popular there. But the musical success which the evangelists achieved was owing no more to the happy

selection of songs that they made, than it was to their skill in getting them before the public. Sankey sung them, and sung them with much effect. That would go far in introducing them to the public. But the evangelists were too shrewd to stop with that. They had great numbers printed, the hymns with the music, and the hymns in cheap vest-pocket editions without the music. And the sale and distribution of these were pushed on all hands. Some millions of copies, we are told, were scattered throughout Great Britain. When the evangelists went to a city to hold a series of meetings, pains were taken to get their hymn-books into the hands of as many as possible of the people of the city, and when the meetings were begun not only did Mr. Sankey sing, but he got the whole congregation, from the first, singing with him. And to do this the more effectually he organized, before the meetings begun, great and powerful chorus choirs to set the fashion to and lead the congregation.

And now, who does not know the power of such singing over the masses of the people who attend meetings and find themselves surrounded by it, and are borne along on the billows of it, to be well-nigh irresistible?

A theology which in sober thought a man would cast away with loathing, he would find himself before he knew it joining in the singing of, with the multitude; and finally, through the singing, he would be drawn actually to embrace it. I have been in the meetings of Moody and Sankey, and found the stanchest kind of Unitarians, who believed the whole notion of the blood atonement to be false and pernicious, under the bewildering fascinations of the place join with fervor in singing such hymns as

“ There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,”

and

“ Jesus paid it all ; all to Him I owe ;
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow.”

I repeat—he who has simply heard Mr. Sankey sing knows little about the real power of the music of the Moody and Sankey meetings. Only he knows that who has himself stood in the midst of the great multitude, and that day after day and night after night, and felt himself thrilled and awed and borne away by the strange power of its mighty choruses.

But the agency which I am convinced has been the most powerful of all in securing the success of the Moody and Sankey movements of both England and this country is the shrewd business management which has everywhere been displayed, particularly in the direction of advertising, and securing beforehand the tremendous backing of the churches. Said Mr. Farrington, in a letter from England to *The Christian Register*, with reference to Mr. Moody, when in the height of his work there: “ One command, ‘Do not sound a trumpet before thee,’ is not enforced at his coming. For months before his advent here (in Manchester) the trumpets blew daily. Ministers taught their flocks that the Lord was coming to do a great work here. Daily noon prayer-meetings were organized, in which the prayers were advertisements of this Moody who should come, and in which the hymns were rehearsals of the choruses which to Sankey’s solos would be sung. So it is everywhere. They go to London in March, and as early as last December meetings of preparation were organized. The whole thing is worked up with all the

system of a political campaign." "This is nothing against it," continues Mr. Farrington; "but it explains the mystery of the eager, anxious throng. Just a day or two ago this great evangelist, who relies so much, not upon an arm of flesh, but upon the power of God, refused to go to Sheffield, because there had been a break in the ministerial organization which was there to work from house to house to make his path straight and his crowd great before him. This was very sensible of him. But one does not see how it connects with the cant about the pretense that this is all a sudden and wonderful outpouring of God."

The papers tell us that Gladstone expressed the opinion a while ago that the Moody and Sankey meetings could have had no considerable success, "unless sustained with the same energy and pertinacity of wholesale advertising, which, until quite recently, was better known to the inventors of certain descriptions of blacking and certain kinds of medicine." Pretty strong words for the orthodox ex-premier. And it seems to have been the same in our Eastern cities since the evangelists came to this country. The advertising has been enormous. Barnum never began to keep his shows so persistently and constantly before the public as were the Hippodrome meetings, from first to last, in one way and another, kept before the people of New York.

Who can estimate the influence of all this in giving them the success they had? And as to the backing of the churches, too, who can estimate the power of that? Why, let all the so-called evangelical churches of any great city combine on anything; especially let them combine, after having worked themselves up into expectancy and fervor, by weeks and months of preparatory effort, and what may we not

expect to see accomplished? The wonder is, with such advertising, such working up of the ground, and such backing, not that our evangelists drew such crowds, but rather that they did not draw larger; not that they created so great an excitement as they did, but rather that they did not create a greater still. When a mountain labors, you have a right to expect that something more than a mouse will be brought forth.

Just as these gentlemen have refused in the past to go to any place to labor, either in Great Britain or this country, unless they could beforehand receive the pledge of the entire evangelical influence, so they propose to refuse to go anywhere in the future where they cannot receive like support. They give promise that they will come to Chicago. But, if they are to do so, the time from now till they come must be occupied in preparation for their coming; and when they get here, all the evangelical ministers must give up their evening meetings for thirty days, and make their churches so many feeders to the central meetings and work. And to this the churches of this city, through their ministers at lower Farwell Hall last Monday afternoon, pledged themselves, even the broad-minded and liberal Mr. Bartlett, of Plymouth church, going so far as to say that "there was no church in Chicago but what would be controlled by Mr. Moody, and do as he wished during the meetings." And yet, all these things being so, when Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey come here, and the meetings begin, and crowds flock to them, and conversions begin to be reported, we shall hear the cry all over the city and country, "See what a work the Lord is doing!" And infidels and skeptics will be triumphantly pointed to the success achieved, and bidden

to see in that the irrefutable proof that the movement is of God.

And I confess I am disposed to think myself that it will be a work of God ; and that this whole Moody and Sankey excitement, from its beginning, has been a work of God. But not for the same reasons or in the same sense that my good evangelical friends think them works of God. If God "makes the wrath of men to praise him," so does he also, in the end, I think, make the foolishness of men, and the blind zeal of men, and the low, unworthy ways of working of men, to praise him.

"God's ways seem dark, but soon or late
They touch the shining hills of day."

You know it was the great revivals that swept over New England under Whitefield that sowed the seed of Unitarianism and Universalism in America. So let us be sure that if this kind of work which Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey are doing in this country continues long, and spreads far, it will sow such seeds of liberalism in the United States as have never been sown. Revivalism, based upon such principles, and especially upon such theology as our modern revivalism is based upon, is a kind of thing from which, sooner or later, there must be a reaction ; and a reaction, too, powerful and far-reaching, just in the degree that the revivalism has been powerful and far-reaching.

Nothing is more certain than that this age of enlightenment is not going back permanently to Moody doctrines and Moody methods. There may be eddies in the stream of the world's progress, but the great stream will move irresistibly on in spite of all. Advance, and not retrogression ; better things, and not worse, are the destiny alike of our civilization and our religion.

CHICAGO, June, 1876.

THE MOODY AND SANKEY REVIVAL AS AN INSTRUMENTALITY FOR "REACHING THE MASSES."

"The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show."—
LUKE xvii. 20.

PERHAPS there is nothing for which the revival meetings of Messrs. Moody and Sankey have been so generally commended as for the fact that they have been so successful in "reaching the masses." Large numbers of persons, who really have little sympathy with the kind of thing that these meetings stand for, have yet been led to refrain from opposition, and even to lend their influence in favor of the meetings, because they have said to themselves, "These revivalists seem to have a great power to get hold of a class of people that do not appear to be reached in other ways."

The more active and ardent friends of the revivalists have urged from the beginning, with great persistency and unction, the claim that the "masses" were being "reached," as almost never before in the history of this country or England; and a systematic effort seems to have been made, from the first, to create the impression generally that, of course, all who were friends of the masses would support the meetings on this ground.

I ask you to join with me in as careful an examination as we can make, in a single half hour, of this matter of "reaching the masses." For I freely confess that I for one am convinced that there is abun-

dant room for investigation, for light, for clearer thinking than has usually been done on this subject. It seems to me a matter really of astonishment (and I think that future generations will more and more be astonished at it) that our thoughtful religious men of this country and England should have taken so much for granted in this thing ; should have made so little effort as they seem to have made to get down to the bottom of the matter, and to find out what are the necessary conditions of all reaching the masses that amounts to anything.

In the first place, with reference to this work of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, it is to be observed, that the congregations that have been drawn together have turned out to be, to nothing like the extent predicted, congregations of persons who could not otherwise be reached by religious influences ; instead of that they have been really made up, in large part, of already professing Christians who flocked to the meetings to enjoy a season of religious dissipation. Mr. Moody probably tried earnestly to prevent this. But he does not seem to have been more than partially successful, and in some places he seems to have been positively unsuccessful. So that, on the very threshold of our inquiry concerning the Moody and Sankey meetings as an instrumentality for reaching the masses, we are met by the fact that "the eager, anxious throng, which moves with busy haste along" to find a place within the great halls where the evangelists speak and sing, is made up in large part not of the masses at all, if by the masses we mean people who are not regular church-goers. But the newspaper press, in reporting the meetings, have brought out this feature of them so clearly and often that I need only mention it.

What I wish especially to do is to inquire what is the value of such meetings as those of Moody and Sankey, even on the supposition that they are attended by non-professors of religion in as large numbers as any one could wish?

It would be scarcely possible for an expression to be more ambiguous in meaning than is the expression "reaching the masses." There are a thousand different ways of reaching the masses, and a thousand different objects that one may have in view in reaching them.

They may be reached for a good object in a good way, or for a good object in a bad way, or for a bad object in a bad way, or for a bad object in what may be a measurably good way. So that a man must know a great many things before he can decide whether reaching the masses be a good or an evil.

Reaching the masses is by no means a hard thing to do, if one isn't particular how he does it. If one will only go down upon the level of the masses, do things and set them doing things which they like to see done and do, talk things which they like to hear talked, and, generally, interest himself in those things which they are interested in—seeking only to amuse, move, or excite—he will have a light task. That is to say, if, being a political speaker, he will make a free use of buncombe, funny stories, low wit, and invective; or if, being a theater manager, he will keep his stage well supplied with comedy, sensational plays, spectacular scenery, ballet dancing, and such kind of things; or if, being a newspaper editor, he will fill his columns liberally with gossip, reports of crime and scandal, exciting stories, and the like; or if, being a preacher, he will bring his

preaching and methods of religious work down to the same low level, he will find his road to his goal of reaching the masses (if he has any talent at all) a comparatively short and direct one. Of course he will! because he has come down to the plane on which they like to be reached. Men like to hear stories, they like to be amused, they like to have their imaginations played upon, they like to be excited and aroused and made to feel—little matter whether the cause of the excitement and emotion be a play in a theater or a preacher telling a story about a dying child; and the man who sets out to reach them on that level is doing scarcely a more difficult thing than throwing himself into a current to float with it.

But the question immediately presents itself for consideration, whenever we begin to talk about any such kind of reaching the masses as that, What does it all amount to when we get them so reached? True, the editor and theater manager make money by it—the thing they are after; and the politician gets notoriety and votes by it—the things he is after; and the religionist draws crowds, and gets up excitements in communities by it. But the masses themselves, what better off are they than they were before they were reached, or than they would have been if they had never been reached at all, according to that manner of reaching people? That is the important question.

I apprehend that any reaching of the masses, which is worth the serious attention of persons whose aim is to accomplish lasting good, must proceed upon a radically different principle from this. The question of the really wise man, in all his efforts to reach the masses, will be, not what the masses desire, but what they need; not what they at present respond

to, feel an interest in, can appreciate, have attained to the level of; but what it is desirable that they should respond to, feel an interest in, appreciate, attain to the level of. He will not stoop to the level of the masses in any such sense as so many others stoop to the level of the masses. On the other hand, he will resolutely refuse to do any such stooping. He knows that the sun is able to lift the waters of the sea because it (the sun) is above the sea. He knows that the intercourse of the parent with his child is able to lift the child up continually into higher and higher intelligence and strength, because the parent is above the child in intelligence and strength. He knows that a school, in which all the teachers should be on a level with the scholars in knowledge and discipline, would of necessity fail to accomplish any good.

Therefore, when he sees the masses ignorant, he does not say, "I will go to them clothed in an ignorance as great as their own." When he sees the masses steeped in bigotry and superstition, particularly religious bigotry and superstition, he does not say, "I will approach them with doctrines and ideas as superstitious and narrow as theirs." When he sees them addicted to fanaticism, to running when they are not sent, to sentimentalism, to harmful excitements, to low, unregulated, unworthy enthusiasms, he does not say, "I will go to them to take advantage of these, to throw myself into the current that is running, to add fuel to the fires of their fanaticism and excitements, their unworthy and unregulated enthusiasms." Rather he says, "I will none of these things." Wishing to reach the masses, he wishes so to reach them as to do them good; and because he wishes so to reach them as to

do them good, he will forego all methods and means which promise a success which, though immediate, is worth nothing when it comes; and give his attention and strength solely to those things that conduce to results which, while they may be distant, and to be attained only slowly and without much outward show, yet when they are attained are substantial, enduring, valuable.

Wishing to reach the masses so as to do them good, he will endeavor to reach them, not from below to draw them downward; nor yet from their own level, to leave them no higher than when he began; but from above, so that the result of his efforts may be to draw them upward, to in every way higher and better things.

In what way must he go to work in order to accomplish this that he wishes? Not by adopting any short cuts or quack processes. There is no "royal road" or "lightning express trains" to virtue, to integrity, to honor, to moral or spiritual attainment, to largeness and ripeness of manhood, to sweetness and strength of character, to true religion, any more than there is to knowledge. Therefore will he only deceive himself and others, and do harm rather than good, if he resort to anything so superficial and short-lived as mere appeals to men's emotions and attempts under the influence of excited feelings to produce spasmodic action of the will; whether men call these emotional excitements and spasmodic will-efforts "professing religion" or "being converted" or anything else. He must put utterly and forever away all such ideas as that his work is one that can possibly be accomplished in a single evening, or under the heat and nervous tension of a great religious meeting, or that any transient emotional ex-

perience or single action of the will can probably have any large or controlling part in it.

If he would reach the masses in a way really and permanently to elevate them, he must rather set in operation agencies which shall begin to exert their influence upon people in as early life as possible, and especially, continue for terms of years; and which shall aim at nothing short of slowly creating intelligence; carefully forming habits of thought; patiently nourishing sentiments that are pure and high; weaving the very structure of the minds of those dealt with, full of ideas and views of things that are true and ennobling; slowly and silently building up character. Anything which undertakes to draw attention away from these things, or to substitute something else to any degree in the place of them, he must have nothing to do with, knowing it to be an enemy of the work which he has at heart.

These, it seems to me, are the principles which the truly wise man will act upon, and the methods which he will employ in all his undertakings to reach the masses.

And why should he not act upon these principles and employ these methods? Are they not philosophical? Are they not scientific? Do they not harmonize with the best wisdom that comes down to us from the past? Are they not pre-eminently the principles, and, so far as changed times and conditions of society will allow, pre-eminently the methods, of Jesus?

What are these masses that are to be reached? Are they not beings of manifold wants, slow growth, complex nature? Have they not a physical nature and an intellectual nature, as well as a religious? Is not their intellectual nature dependent for its healthful development largely upon their physical?

And is not their religious nature dependent for its healthful development largely upon both their intellectual and physical natures? Isn't that gospel which comes with its loaf to the physically hungry of them, or its gift of valuable knowledge to the starving minds among them, as truly, in its place, a gospel from heaven, as that which comes bearing a purely religious message? Far too long has Christendom been carrying on the experiment of trying to lift men up through their religious nature alone. In the nature of the case it is impossible that the experiment should succeed more than to a limited and very meager extent. The entire man must be taken hold of. If we pay our whole attention to perfecting a man's body and bodily conditions, we get at best but a splendid animal. If we pay our whole attention to his mind, we get at best an intellectual giant, who is about as likely to be a devil as anything else. If we pay our whole attention to his religious nature, we are well-nigh certain to turn him out a mere bigot and a fanatic.

So that, in the case of a single man, when we undertake the work of lifting him up toward perfection of manhood and fullness of life, we undertake not a one-sided but a many-sided, not a simple but a very complex thing. What shall we say then when our work is the elevation not of a single person but of a great aggregate of persons, with their endless variety of constitutions, capacities, habits, passions, inclinations, weaknesses, circumstances of life? Are we going to be able to do it by means of any one instrumentality? On the contrary, the agencies we must employ, and the channels in which we must work, must be as various as human needs. For those whose wants are primarily physical, we must work

in one way, for those whose wants are primarily intellectual, or social, or moral, or spiritual, our work must be in quite different ways. Our work for the child cannot employ the same instrumentalities as our work for the adult. Our work for the already vicious cannot run in the same grooves as our work for those whom we would simply prevent from falling into vice. Our work for the poor must aim to help them so far as possible out of their poverty; our work for the ignorant must aim to dispel their ignorance; our work for young men and women without homes in a city full of temptations must aim at supplying the place of homes, and giving them social helps. And so on. As there is no single panacea which can cure all the ills which flesh is heir to, so there is no single panacea which can cure all the evils of a highly complex society. The work must go on in many lines and under many forms, though all governed by the same general principles. As a rule the nearer to nature it is, and the more silent and continuous, the more really effective it will be.

Such reaching of the masses as shall be at all adequate to the needs of the times must include, I apprehend, many things that are not even dreamed of in the revivalist philosophy. I apprehend that it must include, and include not merely incidentally but *primarily* and *centrally*, all such work as founding popular free libraries; opening, by the thousand, free and easily accessible reading, club, and amusement rooms; making social provision of various kinds for young men and women, particularly of the class that are limited in means and are adrift in the world; getting in operation numerous and varied courses of interesting and valuable lectures at little or no cost; circulating broad, liberal, healthful, instructive, in-

spiring literature in the form of tracts, pamphlets, papers, and books; establishing and carrying on industrial schools; making systematic and persistent effort to gather and keep in the day-schools such children as are now little else than vagrants and truants; multiplying and building up into efficiency, in all parts of the country, such institutions as the Chicago Athenæum and the New York Cooper Institute, where all classes of people, no matter how poor they may be, can educate themselves; founding hospitals and institutions of beneficence of every kind; organizing associations to help the poor to cheap homes, and to comfortable and healthful tenements; forming co-operative associations, and associations to carry on industrial operations, in such ways as shall insure work of some kind, at some wages (even though low), to the poor at all times.

Such efforts to reach the masses have a look of adequacy about them; are sweet and wholesome; have in them no taint of fanaticism; do not debauch the public mind; are practical; go down to the roots of things.

I do not mean to deny that large numbers of persons who favor Mr. Moody engage, to a greater or less extent, in such works and undertakings as these. But if they are true disciples of their Master, they engage in them as *very secondary matters*. With Mr. Moody the overshadowingly important thing is none of these. And this is what I object to. I hold that these are all of the utmost importance, and that to overshadow and cast them into the far background, to again and again and perpetually and with the utmost fervor call public attention away from them, as his preaching does call attention away from them, to something which has to do only with the emotions,

or at most with a temporary excitement of the will, cannot but be deeply harmful.

Revivals are unquestionably good, if only the things revived are the right things. If, in the place of revivals of emotionalism and irrational, old-time notions of soul-saving, we could have revivals of these things which I have been mentioning, these things which take hold on the very roots of society, and go to the very springs of human influence and character, then the more revivals the better. And why not have revivals of just these things? Why should not our evangelists, if they care to effect the deepest and most lasting good in society, go forth to awaken such kind of revivals? Why not the whole Christian forces of great cities join hands to inaugurate new movements to reach the masses according to these rational and really effective methods? Does any thoughtful man doubt that the amount of good done would be vastly greater than can possibly be done by the popular revivals of our day? Suppose the vast amount of money, time, and work expended in the Brooklyn, Philadelphia, and New York meetings of Mr. Moody, last winter, had been expended in wisely planned enterprises of popular education, beneficence, and reform; suppose that all the churches of those cities, instead of joining in Mr. Moody's meetings, had united as thoroughly and earnestly for a tremendous wrestle of one, two, or three solid months with the ignorance, the squalor, the truancy, the intemperance, the vice, the crime, the bad sanitary and social conditions of those cities; does any one doubt as to the value of what might thus have been accomplished, compared with what actually was accomplished? Or suppose that Mr. Moody, when he comes to Chicago to begin his cam-

paign of three months here, instead of undertaking a work of sensational religious revivalism, could unite the whole Christian influence of the city in a great movement, say to place the Athenæum upon its feet, giving it suitable apartments and endowments, and fitting it to do the magnificent work that it is calculated to do for untold thousands of our people for all time to come; or, if not this, then a movement say to open accessible, commodious, and pleasant rooms in all parts of the city (possibly in connection with all the leading churches of the city), where young men could go evenings to read the latest papers, magazines, and books, to meet friends, to chat, to play billiards or chess, to hear and take part in music, to join in social and literary clubs, to listen to cheap but good lectures, in a word, to find regular and continuous entertainment, instruction, and good society, and be saved from the thousand bad social influences of a great city; or, if neither of these, then perhaps a movement to establish, or enlarge, or make more efficient, institutions of beneficence of some of the many kinds that are so much needed for the benefit of the poor, the sick, the crippled, the aged, orphan children, children growing up in ignorance, poverty, and crime, children of delicate constitutions who need country air during the hot summers, but whose parents cannot afford the expense of sending them away! There is no end of worthy objects urging themselves upon the attention of Christian people, all of them of a character to reach the masses in the most direct, life-giving, and lasting way, and all of them full to the brim with just such salvation as Jesus cared and labored for, and as the world most deeply needs.

Suppose then, I say, that Mr. Moody, when he

comes here, instead of undertaking the old programme of emotional excitement and theological soul-saving, should set himself earnestly to work in some of these channels of rational beneficence, and that he could succeed in uniting the two hundred Protestant churches of the city in a three months' campaign of energetic work with him in these channels, using no more time or money or energy of mind and heart than will be expended in the proposed three months' revival meetings, does any one doubt that the kingdom of heaven would make such an advance in Chicago as was never known? And then, in addition to this, suppose that, a year later, when another winter comes and the churches of the city begin to talk about another revival, they should decide to make that revival also a revival of practical instead of theoretical religion; and that, a year later still, they should make the same decision; and that every winter for even a single ten years they should turn all the enormous aggregate of the energies, that they are in the habit of spending in revivals, into works of practical good-doing; now one, until they had got that well on its feet; now another, until they had assured the success of that; now another still, until the whole city was thoroughly aroused to sympathy and support of that, and so on! Can there be any question as to the magnificence of the results which the end of the first decade of the new century would witness? Can there be any question as to the reality and value and permanence of this kind of reaching the masses? Can any one imagine the Christian people of Chicago, after this experience, consenting to go back again to the present methods of Mr. Moody and the revivalists? consenting to use up every winter the best religious energies of the

whole year in efforts to beat up the public mind into a religious froth ?

Some of us have had some experience of the popular revivalistic methods of reaching the masses in smaller towns and country villages. Here the evils that grow out of these methods are even more apparent than in the large cities. The most ungodly and hardened, the most spiritually, morally, mentally, and socially desolate and poverty-stricken communities I have myself ever seen, have been villages and towns, in both the East and the West, which have been in the habit of being swept every two or three winters, for a long series of years, by a "revival." A community has only about so much mental, social, or religious energy. If this be consumed in a tremendous, convulsive religious movement of many weeks' duration in the winter, what can be left for the rest of the year, for other religious work of calmer kinds, and for individual mental culture and general social life ? Contrast a village which pours its efforts to reach the masses into these revivalistic channels, with another village no larger, no more prosperous in material things, no better situated, having no discoverable advantage over it except that the latter has long been blessed with broader and more advanced ideas with regard to these matters of which I am speaking. Its people long ago saw (and have ever since acted accordingly) that the true way to save their community, and build up the kingdom of heaven among them, was to pay attention to their common schools ; make provision for advanced education, by maintaining a good academy or high school ; establish a good town library ; organize and keep in vigorous life lyceums and literary clubs of some kind ; make as much as possible of general

social life ; plan for religious work that should not exhaust itself in a winter revival spasm, but should spread itself evenly over the year, filling it all with instruction, encouragement, calm and thoughtful regular worship, and systematic religious culture, works of charity, every sweet and helpful thing. Could anything be more convincing, as to the true way to reach the masses so as really and permanently to benefit them, than such a contrast as this ? And such a contrast is not a fancy picture. As I myself am acquainted with many villages of the former kind, so also am I with not a few of the latter. Indeed, no one who has been abroad over the country much, with his eyes open to social and religious phenomena, can have failed to observe again and again such contrasts, more or less distinctly marked. It is said, upon what seems to be good authority, that that man who was perhaps the greatest of American revivalists, Charles G. Finney, in traveling later over the field of his wonderfully successful revival labors of forty years ago in Central New York, expressed a serious doubt whether the work accomplished there, taken in the sum total of its results, had been good. And it is well known that the great President Edwards, as the result of years of study of the influence of revivals (particularly a powerful one which under his own ministry had visited his village of Northampton), declared his serious distrust of all such methods of religious work, confessing his grave doubts whether "the greater part of supposed converts give reason by their conversation to suppose that they continue converts," and expressing his growing conviction that permanent and healthful advance can come to religion only through more calm and natural means.

Is it not time that the ardent admirers of Mr. Moody and his work were heeding some of these things ?

Does any one say that criticism upon methods adopted by men, as honest and earnestly desirous of doing good as Mr. Moody, is ungracious ? I reply, Unquestionably fault-finding for fault-finding's sake, or criticism for mere criticism's sake, *is* ungracious, and something which, especially in connection with serious matters, is to be condemned. But, if it be maintained that because a man simply means well, and does what he does in the name of religion, he must therefore be left free to adopt any extravagant and false ideas or harmful methods he pleases, and no one must call anything he does in question, then I emphatically demur. Who does not know that many of the worst evils that afflict society come at the hands of men who are earnest and mean well ? And that not a few come wearing the name of religion ? The fact is, we live in an age of advance, because we live in an age of criticism. And when we fence off any department of thought or work, and say that thoughtful and candid criticism has no place there, we simply doom that department of thought or work (all the same whether it be religious, or other) to stagnation and inefficiency, if not to superstition. If I criticise Mr. Moody's or any other man's religious teachings or ways of work, it is because I desire something better. With all my soul do I want the masses to be reached. I am unwilling to admit that Mr. Moody can want this one whit more earnestly than I do. Indeed, it is the depth of my desire in this direction that makes me lament, as I do lament, the fact that so large a part of the Christian public are satisfied with anything which seems to me so crude, so superficial, so inadequate, so rad-

ically opposed to all true principles of reaching the masses (for any purposes of permanently benefiting them), as this whole revival work seems to me to be.

When one realizes how hard it is at the best to get the public mind imbued with any enlightened ideas of the real laws and principles of human progress, how can he but lament to see the meager advance that is being made subjected to such periodical set-backs as these which the evangelists give us? For, can any thoughtful man conceive it possible for a community to pass through a series of Mr. Moody's meetings without finding at the end that the effect has been seriously to confuse popular ideas of mental, but especially of moral and spiritual education; and to obscure men's vision with regard to the whole matter of how it is that human beings can be really lifted up and made more of, and how progress and improvement can really be secured in society?

And when one reflects how large and grand a work the work of really reaching the masses in enlightened, effective, and lasting ways is, and how long it must take to accomplish it, even with all the help possible to be obtained, how can he help asking with profound sorrow why it is that so much of the best devotion and energy of Christendom must be diverted every year into channels that lead rather away from than toward the end desired?

Says Mr. Ruskin, in his first volume of Oxford Lectures, "When any of you go abroad (on the continent of Europe), observe and consider the meaning of the sculptures and paintings, which, of every rank in art, and in every chapel and cathedral, and by every mountain-path, recall the hours, and represent the agonies, of the Passion of Christ; and try to

form some estimate of the efforts that have been made, by the four arts of eloquence, music, painting, and sculpture, since the twelfth century, to wring out of the hearts of women the last drops of pity that could be excited for this merely physical agony.

* * * Try to conceive the quantity of time, and of excited and thrilling emotion, which have been wasted by the tender and delicate women of Christendom during these last six hundred years, in thus picturing to themselves, under the influence of such imagery, the bodily pain, long since past, of One Person. * * * And then try to estimate what might have been the better results for the righteousness and felicity of mankind, if these same women had been taught the deep meaning of the last words that were ever spoken by their Master to those who ministered to him of their substance, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for your children;' if they had been taught to measure with their pitiful thoughts the tortures of battle-fields; the slowly consuming plagues of death in the starving children and wasted age, of the innumerable desolate those battles left;—nay, in our own life of peace, the agony of unnurtured, untaught, unhelped creatures, awaking at the grave's edge to know how they should have lived; and the worse pain of those whose existence not the ceasing of it is death; those to whom the cradle was a curse, and for whom the words they cannot hear, 'ashes to ashes,' are all that they have ever received of benediction."

Friends, are these words of Mr. Ruskin startling? But who does not feel the terribly keen edge of their truth? Is it not true that Europe, during the past six centuries, has expended in mere sentimental religious emotionalism, in the one single direction

which Mr. Ruskin mentions, an amount of energy of mind and heart which, guided in rational and proper channels, would have transformed measureless ignorance into knowledge, prevented untold crime, dried up rivers of human tears, and glorified God by blessing the race to an extent that we can scarcely conceive ?

And yet, who of us may presume to judge our brethren across the sea in this matter ? For are not a majority of the professedly Christian people of this country accustomed to do habitually what amounts to the very same thing ? Do they not regularly and systematically spend much of the cream of their energies of mind and heart in revivals and theological emotionalism ; thus leaving themselves of necessity just so much less to put into works of education, charity, philanthropy, and reform ?

I press the question, Who can measure the magnificent results for good that might have been accomplished if the time and money, and especially if the immense energy of mind and heart that have been expended in connection with Mr. Moody's meetings in England and this country, not to say the hundreds and thousands of other revival meetings conducted by other men, had been turned into channels of practical usefulness such as I have enumerated ; had been devoted (instead of to the production of mere emotions and spasmodic will-efforts) to such reaching of the masses as instructs the ignorant, provides for the wants of the helpless and unfortunate, alleviates pain and suffering, cures the ills of poverty, dries up human sorrow, lays hold of every instrumentality in its power to lift society up into better sanitary conditions, better social and even pecuniary conditions, larger intelligence, truer

views of life, more rational religion, nobler manhood and womanhood?

Oh! when there is everywhere so much ignorance to be dispelled, so many human wrongs to be righted, so many degrading conditions of human society to be improved, it is pitiful that any of us should be so well content with firing religious rockets and building religious bonfires!

Great Christian Church! whenever thou art tempted to say, "Go to! I will invite a famous evangelist, and stir up myself to reach the masses by sounding a trumpet before me and holding a great revival meeting;" first go and write above thy pulpit where thy famous evangelist is to stand, in letters which all the crowds can read, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that *doeth the will of my Father* who is in Heaven."

CHICAGO, August, 1876.

THE IDEAL CHURCH.

“Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.”—MATT. ix. 17.

WE have here suggested a thought of vital and perpetual importance in connection with the building up of the institutions of religion. In the past history of Christianity, a great deal of harm has undoubtedly come from overlooking it. It needs to come into a great deal clearer recognition than perhaps it has yet reached anywhere. New life must have new forms of outward expression and embodiment. To some extent this is true of the lowest forms of life. The tiny germ of wheat, as it starts from the soil in spring, is quite different in form from the half-grown or full-grown wheat stalk. The hundreds of little elm trees that came up in my garden last spring and summer, with their single pair of leaves for a long time constituting almost the entire tree, were very different in form from the elms which would have developed from these infant things in twenty or forty years. So, too, in the human being; the life, as it continues on from birth, forms for itself or associates with itself a growing and ever-changing body. The body of the man looks very different, and is very different, from the body of the infant or the boy.

But the principle I wish to trace is much more distinctly seen as we come to look at life in its wider and less individual forms. When we come to institutions, it appears very clearly. A new kind of social life requires new forms and outward appurtenances of living. As men, in the progress of civilization, advance from polygamy to monogamy, and the family, as we know it, consisting of one father and one mother and their children, comes to be recognized as the unit, and in some sort the sacred unit of society, very many other forms and appurtenances and surroundings of outward society must be changed from what they were under the old order, to harmonize with the new. Or, as men advance from a life of hunters to a life of shepherds, or from a life of shepherds to a life of agriculturists, or from a purely agricultural to a partly or wholly commercial or manufacturing or city life, the change expresses itself or embodies itself in great numbers of changes of external kinds in reference to all the institutions and appliances of society. Ever the new life must have, as it were, a new body to house itself in.

Nowhere, perhaps, is this more noticeable than in connection with political institutions. In early and rude conditions of society, when men are ruled by a brave and powerful chief, political institutions are a very different thing from what they necessarily become later, as the authority of the chief gives place to that of a king; and then, later still, when the authority of the king gives place to that of a king and council; and then, later still, with the still further advance of society, when the king passes off the stage, and the ruling power becomes a legislature and executive chosen by the people themselves. As the theory of the government changes, of necessity

all the outward forms and machinery and appliances of the government must change correspondingly. If not, there will be collision, disaster, failure. A government "of the people, for the people, and by the people," like our own, could never be conducted successfully by means of the machinery and appliances which serve well for a government of an Arab chief, or an Asiatic despot, or even a European limited constitutional monarchy. The life must have a body adapted to it. If the life changes, the body must change correspondingly.

This, I think, is the thought (in its application to religion) which Jesus meant to convey when he uttered my text: "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." Ever the religious thought and life of the world changes, grows, becomes more diverse, complex, rich. Ever that growth and enlargement must find adequate outward expression, therefore, and external appliances for doing its work. It will not do to think of keeping to-day the exact religious appliances, organizations, methods of operation of three thousand years ago, or one thousand years ago, or any time in the past, any more than it will to think of keeping to-day the exact social or political appliances and methods of three thousand years ago, one thousand years ago, or any time in the past. The kinds of machinery, organizations, methods, which we want to-day in religion, as in everything else, are such as adapt themselves most perfectly to our present condition and present needs. So Jesus taught; so all best experience teaches; so reason teaches; so, as time goes on, men must more and more clearly see it to be.

This brings me to the subject of my sermon, with the way well opened for the thoughts which I wish to present.

The Ideal Church—what is it? In the light of what I have already said, I can answer in a word: It is that Church, in this or any other age, in our own or any other country, which best meets the practical religious wants of the time and the people. The Ideal Church for Rome is a Roman Church; the Ideal Church for Greece is a Greek Church; the Ideal Church for England is an English Church; the Ideal Church for America is an American Church. I do not mean that these names are anything. A Church in this country called an American Church would be no better than the same thing called by any other name. On the other hand, a really Ideal Church here might be called by a foreign name—Greek, or Roman, or Dutch Reform, or Abyssinian, for that matter. The whole importance is, that the *thing* be American—I mean, just adapted to our wants as Americans—and, what is more still, just adapted to the particular community and people among whom it is.

But many tell us with great confidence that certainly that is the Ideal Christian Church which was founded by Jesus. If only we will go back and inquire precisely what kind of an organization he perfected, we shall beyond question have the Ideal Church. To this I answer, that, so far as we have any information, he did not organize any outward church at all. The word translated “church” in the New Testament is the Greek word “ἐκκλησία,” which simply means an assembly or congregation. He simply gathered people together as he could, in congregations larger or smaller, and preached to them.

That is all. It was not until long after Jesus' death that any Christian churches were organized. Neither did Jesus leave any directions behind as to how they should be organized. There is nothing that I think of in all his teachings that touches the question so squarely as does the text before us to-day ; and this, so far from prescribing any form of church organization or machinery, lays down the great principle that no such form can be prescribed which will be good for anything beyond a certain limited area and time. Ever the new wine of a fresh, changing, growing, religious life must have new bottles to contain it.

The disciples of Jesus unquestionably organized churches. But everywhere they seem to have done this, not according to any prescribed plan, but simply, always, in such a form and way as would subserve the religious needs of the people ; in other words, they always seem to have acted upon this broad principle of Jesus. For a considerable time the early Church seems to have followed on in the same channel. But at last it got out, and began to inquire, as we hear so many inquiring to-day, What was the old plan ? What was the authorized, ordained plan ? An inquiry which has always brought religious stagnation, fossilization, death.

So, then, while I admit that the Ideal Church, for certain parts of England, a century ago, may have been, or at least may have approximated, the Methodist Church which the Wesleys founded ; and the Ideal Church for Scotland, three hundred years ago, the Presbyterian Church, which John Knox founded ; and the Ideal Church for our Puritan forefathers, the Calvinistic Churches which they founded in New England ; and the Ideal Church for Germany, in the sixteenth century, the church which

Luther founded ; and the Ideal Churches for Antioch and Jerusalem and Ephesus, fifty years after Christ, the churches which the disciples of Jesus founded there ; yet I cannot admit that any one of these was such as would be an Ideal Church for this American Republic of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the very adaptation of those churches to the special needs of other times and peoples than ours, makes them, in some measure at least, unadapted to us. Ever the new wine of new religious thought and life needs and must have new bottles of new organizations, appointments, methods of expression, and work, to correspond. I say it forever must be so.

So, then, the great question for a Christian people to ask in this age, as in every other, as regards the Church, is, How can we most perfectly adapt it to the practical wants of our time and us? How can we make it best subserve the highest interest of this community in which, in God's providence, it and we are? And, friends, if these questions were the foremost questions in the minds of all Christian people as they labor to build up churches, what vastly different results we should see from the results which too often we see now! How vastly more efficient and living and truly Christian a thing the Christian Church would become, than it only too frequently is to-day! With what swift and powerful step it would march forward to the high place it ought to occupy everywhere as an instrumentality of highest good to men!

With this thought in all minds, how rapidly we should at least approximate an Ideal Church!

And now permit me to outline, very briefly, at least some of the features which, it seems to me, the Ideal Church of to-day and our American civilization must

wear. These features, as I have already intimated, must, to some extent, change for every different locality and different set of circumstances under which the people comprising the church find themselves placed. But, after all, I think there are some general features which would be found in a really Ideal Church anywhere and everywhere in this time and country.

And first, let me speak of the *aim* of such a Church.

Negatively, the aim of the Ideal Church will not be self-aggrandizement. Self-aggrandizement, either for man or institution, is not according to the spirit of a true Christianity. Again, the aim of the Ideal Church will not be growth in wealth, only as a secondary and entirely subordinate matter. Of course, I do not mean that it will not need money. I recognize the fact that its usefulness will be increased to an important extent by its wealth, if its wealth only be consecrated wealth. But a Church with right aims will never seek to get wealthy people into it merely because they are rich. It will always bear in mind that Jesus did his work mainly among the poor, and, what is more important still, that the poor, because of their comparatively hard worldly lot, have especial claims upon and need of the Church for comfort and encouragement. Furthermore, the aim of the Ideal Church will not be mutual admiration, or dilettantism, or intellectual or æsthetic or any other kind of mere self-gratification. If men and women must have mutual admiration societies and places to go on Sunday to luxuriate in rich and artistic surroundings, and delight themselves with æsthetic emotions kindled by music or oratory, or to indulge in æsthetic criticisms, let them at least not appropriate the name Church, but spare that for

something better. Again, the aim of the Church will not be to form an "I-am-more-holy-than-thou" society. In other words, it will not be the gathering together the people of a community, who think they are, if not about as good as they want to be, at least better than their fellows, into a select society, who, in their own church ship, propose to ride to heaven under the especial favor and patronage of God. No such aim or thought as that will the true Church have. Finally, its aim will not be the grinding of ecclesiastical or theological grist. I mean, the true Church will not aim to make of itself a mill for the grinding of lost sinners into saved saints by any theological or other process, the monopoly of which is in any sense committed to its hands as a Church.

But the aim of the true or Ideal Church will be always threefold: First, its aim will be to promote the highest and most enduring good; not the mere pleasure or entertainment, but the highest and most enduring good of all its members. It will strive to make itself in the largest and best sense an association for mutual help, for mutual encouragement, church sympathy, co-operation—a truly fraternal band; that thus its members, standing side by side, and supporting each other, may be stronger than they could be alone; and each, doing what he can to bless others, may himself be blessed as otherwise he could not be.

Secondly, its aim will be, not only to promote the highest and most lasting welfare of its membership; but also to go a step further, and extend as far as possible the limits of that membership. The true Church is no closed circle. Its ranks are always open, and its hand always extended to welcome any and all who truly sympathize with its objects. It

would not be a true Church if it made its conditions of membership hard. For thus it would shut out people who, most of all, need to be in. Of course, bad men, who are making little or no effort to be good, should not be received into it, because then it would soon become corrupt and lose its high objects, and become a mere worthless thing—able to accomplish no good for anybody. But bad men (I care not how bad they have been), if they come to that point where they earnestly desire to reform, I think the Ideal Church will always gladly receive.

And, as to the matter of closing the doors of the Church against *doubters* and *unbelievers*, I do not think there is a class of persons in the world more sincerely to be sympathized with than those who find it hardest to believe in religion and spiritual things. I am disposed to think that the Ideal Church, when we have one in this country, will not repel, as the Christian Church in almost all ages has done, but will joyfully and lovingly welcome the earnest doubter, who is feeling for the truth but has not yet been able to find it. I think the True Church will feel that such a person has great claims upon it, and to such it can do more good than to almost any other, by throwing the tender, strong arms of its own love and faith about him. Oh! I think the Church has been cruel—not simply unchristian, but positively cruel—in the way it has treated sincere doubt in the past, and in the way it is only too generally treating it now. As if the sorrow of a man's being compelled by his own honest thinking and investigation to differ from others whom he respects and has believed in harmony with, and to find himself drifting away from anchors which continue to hold others—as if the sorrow of this, I say, were not enough,

without the Church turning its back upon him in this his time of deepest darkness and sorest need. For one, I am in my own mind sure that the Ideal Church, so far from making difference of belief from the majority of its members a ground of rejection from its membership, will, when it comes, open its arms to no class of persons more tenderly than to earnest doubters. Mind, I do not say to quibblers or scoffers, or persons who pride themselves in their unbelief; these have no more a place in a Christian Church than have open adulterers and liars and profaners of sacred things. But honest doubters, men who are inquiring honestly for the truth, sincerely desirous of embracing it just so far and soon as they can find it out—these, no matter in what direction their present beliefs, so far as they have formed beliefs, now lean, I believe the Ideal Church will receive tenderly and joyfully. To such lengths of change from what has been do I think the Christian Church must advance before it does the work in modern society which it ought to do.

And if it ought to go *as far as that*, then surely *smaller* doubts and differences of belief, as, for example, *between Christian sect and Christian sect*, so far from keeping persons out of the Church, should scarcely more be taken into the account in such a connection than the cut of their coats. To let any such thing debar persons from admission to a Christian Church, if those persons are genuinely in sympathy with the general objects and work of the Church, it seems to me is utterly to mistake.

Finally, the aim of the Ideal Church will be, not only, first, to promote the highest and most enduring good of its members, and, secondly, to extend that membership as widely as may be, by feeling a sincere

interest in all our fellow-men, and putting up no hard or unreasonable conditions ; but, third and lastly, its aim also will be to go entirely outside of itself, and do all the good possible, in every way, there. In other words, while it will strive, in every way in its power, to benefit those who are inside its lines, and try earnestly to gather in as many as possible, because it believes that inside is a good place to be, it still will not forget that good is good anywhere, and that it is right and Christian to bless and benefit men in any place and through any channel. Hence, the Ideal Church will interest itself so far as possible in every good word and work of society. It will not be a narrow thing, self-centered, interested only in promoting its own welfare ; feeling that there is nothing of much value, nothing that has saving power, except what has a church label on it. But it will have an open eye, and a warm heart, and a ready hand for all reforms, enlightenments, cultures, beneficencies, charities, humanities—everything which can lift men up to higher planes of living, develop manhood, promote the kingdom of heaven on earth.

This brings me to the question of *organization* of the Ideal Church.

If the aims of the Ideal Church are to be such, or approximately such, as I have indicated, then the question that next suggests itself is, What kind of an organization must it of necessity have, in order to enable it effectively to carry out those aims ? Of course, I cannot attempt here to answer this question with any completeness or in much detail. I can only throw out a few general thoughts.

Doubtless a too prominent place has been given, in the organization and management of churches in the

past, to preaching. In Puritan times preaching seems to have been almost the only thing thought about, or, at least, it seems to have been the great, overshadowing thing, of a public character, which the Church planned for. So emphatically was this the case, that to the preaching, together with the accessories of singing, Scripture-reading, and prayer, which clustered about the central sermon, singularly enough the name "service" or "services" came to be attached. As if the highest idea of service of God entertained was that of going through certain exercises, of which preaching, listening, singing, and the like were chief. And—did you ever think of it?—what a commentary is it upon our Christianity of to-day that we continue to mean, when we speak of engaging in Divine service, or the services of the Sabbath, or of God, merely going to meeting? As if mere going to meeting comes much nearer to serving—*serving* God or our fellow-men—than a farmer's hired man's coming into the house of an evening and sitting down by a comfortable fire, or drawing up to the table at noon to eat a good dinner, comes to serving that farmer. Of course, if the hired man does not get rest when night comes, he will not long be in a condition to render his employer much service. Just so in religion. Hearing preaching is important in its place, and so is prayer important, and sacred song, and all the exercises of public worship; but yet these are not in the truest sense service. Service is not getting, but giving; service is not receiving, but doing; service is not enjoyment or worship, but work. Not when men sing, or listen to a sermon, or pray, valuable as all these are, do they most truly engage in the "service of God," or the "Divine service" of life; but when they do the will of God in

practical labor and sacrifice for others, and in obedience to the behests of duty. Oh! there are lives, which are one "Divine service" almost from beginning to end, which scarcely ever see the inside of a church; while many other lives never have any part or lot in any real "Divine services," whose paths, nevertheless, lie to the church and even the prayer-meetings, regularly as the appointments for these come.

Now, the conception of religion, which has produced this strange perversion of the word service, is one which the Ideal Church, when it comes, will have outgrown. The Ideal Church will listen to preaching and sing and pray not less earnestly and devoutly than does the Church of to-day, or than has done the Church of the past; but to all this it will add a real service of God, through beneficence, labors of love, enthusiasm of humanity, which neither past nor present have reached.

I think the Ideal Church will be vastly broader and more comprehensive than the Church of the past has been. It will labor none the less directly to save men; nay, it will labor more directly and constantly to save men; but its idea of what salvation consists in will be far more rational and true; and its methods of effecting that salvation will be far less theological and artificial, and therefore superficial, and far more simple and natural and permanently effective.

It will attempt to bring spiritual and moral salvation to men largely through bringing them physical, industrial, social, mental salvation. It will realize, as never has been realized, that every part of man's nature stands most intimately connected with every other part; that no part can be neglected without

loss to every other; that saving a man in the true sense is a large thing, too large to be crowded into a few days or hours, or to be accomplished merely by appeals to his feeling or the emotional part of his nature. It will plan, as the Church has never planned, for a salvation which shall require for its consummation, not a few minutes at an anxious seat or a mourners' bench, but a whole life, and which shall be nothing less than that perfection of character, that ripeness of manhood and womanhood, that fullness of life, physical, intellectual, social, moral, and especially spiritual, which is now and eternally happiness and heaven.

It will busy itself to effect for people a salvation, not like the gourd of Jonah, which grew in a night and withered in a day, but a salvation which shall be like the farmer's wheat, that grows silently by day and night, by sun and shower, first reaching "the blade, then the ear, then the full wheat in the ear"—a salvation which allies itself with education, intelligence, culture, all elevating, purifying, ennobling influences, and depends for its attainment, under God, upon nothing less trustworthy and sure than all these combined.

I think the Ideal Church, when we get to it, will take on, a good deal more than most of us suppose, the form of organization of our Christian unions, or unions for Christian work, or social unions, or, if you please, Christian associations, which are of late coming so much into notice. I think these associations and unions have had the success they have because they were a real need. The Church had been a lame, inefficient, one-sided thing; whole departments of work which imperatively needed to be done were not being done by the Church. It is beginning,

of late, to wake up to its failures in these directions wonderfully. The old idea that religious "service" is primarily a going to meeting on Sunday is passing away, and the better idea coming in its place that real religious service is doing duty and serving one's fellow-man (and therefore God) with religious fidelity. The old theological idea of soul-saving is by degrees passing away, and men are beginning to see that true soul-saving is man-saving, woman-saving, character-saving, saving from ignorance and superstition to knowledge, from fear to hope, from weakness to strength, from vice to virtue, from idle and aimless to high and earnest living. And all this enlargement of ideas about religion, service of God, salvation of men, necessitates a vastly enlarged and constantly enlarging idea of the scope and functions of the Church. This will go on, and the Ideal Church, when we get to that, will plan not simply for Sunday, but for all days in the week; not simply for worship, but for work; not simply for adults, but for children; not simply for adults and children, but for the young people; not simply for religious impression, but for much solid instruction, both religious and other; not simply for instruction of any or all kinds, but, in their proper places, for entertainment and amusement. No means will it overlook or instrumentality neglect which it can employ to do good, and benefit either its own membership or others outside. It will preach and sing and pray; doubtless it will, to a greater or less extent, carry on revival meetings of a rational kind; but it will establish and carry on, as not a whit less important in their place, libraries and reading-rooms, and lecture courses, and literary classes, and conversation clubs, and social gatherings, and

entertainments for young and old ; not to say charities, benevolence, good-doing of every kind possible.

We hear a great deal said nowadays about reaching the masses, a great deal that is astonishing for the superficial notion which it reveals of what any reaching the masses that will amount to anything must consist in. Reaching the masses ! Yes, hand-organs reach the masses, negro minstrels reach the masses, pot-house politicians reach the masses. But what better off are the masses after we get them reached ? To reach the masses in a way permanently to benefit them, we must reach them with preaching and singing and prayers in their place ; but, beyond these, as quite as important, we must reach them with knowledge, enlightenment, education—education of body, mind, heart, conscience—better homes, more steady wages, better physical surroundings, better social conditions, better moral influences, helps of every kind that wise and thoughtful and good men and women can devise. This will be reaching the masses which will go down to the roots of things, which will renovate society through and through, and which will endure. The Ideal Church will see this, and will plan its organization and direct its efforts accordingly.

Is the work that I sketch a large work ? I grant it is a stupendous work. It is a work vast enough, ay, and grand enough, too, to fill the hearts and tax the brains and hands of all good men and women on the earth, without reference to name or creed, for generations to come. And the hopeful feature about it lies just in this fact, that men are beginning to realize that it is a vast work, a work so vast that the old church machineries and instrumentali-

ties utterly break down in attempting to accomplish it; and that other instrumentalities, larger, more thorough, more according to nature and reason, more slow-working, may be, but incomparably more deep-working, and therefore more really effective, must be employed, if not in the places of the old instrumentalities, at least to supplement them.

The Church that is to be born, not out of the conceptions or needs of the past times or other lands, but out of the deepest wants, and warmest sympathies and best intelligence, of the here and the now, I say, will see all this, and set itself to work accordingly.

God be thanked for the broader knowledge and better understanding of these things that have come into the Christian Church of this age already. Let it go steadily forward, enlarging and perfecting. God bless every man, woman, or child, who is doing anything to make the Christian Church more effective in its heaven-appointed work of saving the world from its ignorance, its want, its sorrow, its sin. Let these continue intelligently, self-forgettingly, earnestly, patiently, in the spirit of Him, whom, with joy and inspiration, we look to as our teacher and leader in all these things; and thus, believe me, dear Christian friends and brothers, ere we are aware, not only will others all up and down Christendom see, but we ourselves also shall see, at our own very doors, that for which the world so eagerly waits—the Ideal Christian Church.

THE LIFE THAT NOW IS.

“Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.”—1 TIMOTHY iv. 8.

I THINK it to be an absolutely insuperable objection to the whole orthodox, and especially the whole orthodox revivalistic conception of salvation, that it precisely reverses some things which it is of the utmost importance should not be reversed. Instead of, with St. Paul, making godliness profitable, first for the life that now is and after that for the life which is to come, it calls attention first, and with the utmost intensity, to the life that is to come, almost dropping out of account the life that now is. The themes which fill almost the whole horizon of thought, if not in the common Sunday preaching and worship of evangelical orthodoxy, at least in the preaching, exhortation, hymns, and worship of ordinary evangelical revivals, are of a nature far away, post-temporal, essentially speculative, and, withal, calculated to work in the highest degree upon the imagination. The leading and all-overshadowing idea of salvation is that of salvation from pains and penalties yonder, and unto joys and rewards yonder, in the far-away hereafter of another existence. By perpetual disparaging contrasts between this world and the next, the present life is made to sink into

insignificance, and to become despoiled of its attractiveness, dignity, and interest.

In other words, the natural and right perspective between this world and the next is destroyed, and in its place a perspective that is in the highest degree false and mischievous is created.

I have no doubt that it is well to turn one's attention, sometimes, seriously and earnestly to the contemplation of the world to come. Unquestionably it is best for us to understand clearly as we may the extent and limitations of our knowledge concerning that world. Evidently it is healthful to our spirits occasionally to gird ourselves with thoughts of its rewards, fruitions, revelations, glories. We are all so weak, so hesitating, so easily discouraged, so much like children, that we need to have encouragements held out before us, and something done every now and then to kindle anew our hope. We never do work of much value unless we are working for an end. We never run our best unless we are running for some sort of prize. We instinctively drop down into low, unworthy ways of living, into ruts and dreary routines, into low spirits and nervelessness, unless we have something shining before and above us to beckon us. Hence the value to us here and now, in this world, of the fact and thought of heaven. It is a star that never sets. There are few earthly things that are not liable to suffer eclipse. While we gaze at them, and even at the moment when they seem most attractive, and we think them most certainly within our grasp, they sink down behind the dark mountains, often to rise not again. Not so heaven. It forever shines and beckons above us all. Higher than the mountains, above the clouds, yonder it is always, full of cheer

and promise and inspiration of hope. We have reason sincerely to thank God, not only that there is a heaven for us when this life is over, but also that that heaven is, so to speak, in sight even from this world, a constant bow of promise upon our skies; in some sense a prize, shining with untold splendor, to encourage and strengthen us, especially at those times in the lives of us all, when we are weary and sad, and when without some such super-earthly reward life would scarcely seem worth living.

And yet, friends, cheering as the prospect of heaven is in dark hours, bright as is the hope that it flings over life, healthful as occasional, calm, and serious contemplation of it doubtless is, it may, nevertheless, occupy quite too prominent a place in our minds.

And this, as I have intimated, is the thought which I wish to ask you all seriously to consider to-day—especially in its connection with revivals and revival preaching.

All of you who have ever attended religious revival meetings of one kind and another, such as from time to time blaze up here and there all over Protestant Christendom, know very well what overmastering emphasis and prominence are given, in prayer and hymn and exhortation and sermon, to such subjects as heaven and hell and death and judgment and things of the next world generally; and, on the other hand, how correspondingly strong and constant is the effort made to disparage and belittle almost everything pertaining to this world.

As thoughtful men and women placed in this world by One wiser than we, and given a work to do here quite commensurate with our fullest energies, what shall we say of this kind of thing?

Is it good or is it evil? Candidly and seriously, does it help or does it hinder us in performing faithfully our earthly stewardship?

For one I cannot doubt which answer to make. It has been my fortune to see a great deal of these things, in circumstances as well calculated as could be desired to observe their workings and results. And while I recognize in them something of good, I yet cannot but conclude that the evil is vastly greater than the good. Indeed, I am convinced that one of the most foolish and really harmful things which we can any of us do, in ordinary conditions of life and health, is to spend much time in speculating about the world to come. And this for various plain reasons. In the first place, we none of us have more than about so much energy of mind. If this is expended in one way, it cannot be in another. All that is consumed in thinking about, and longing for, and painting pictures of, the life to come, leaves exactly so much less to be put into this life—into the doing of present duties, and the accomplishment of God's will in present hours and events. You cannot be in two places at once. If, while your body is on earth, you are living, in thought and imagination and longings, in a far-away heaven, your body might as well be there too, for all the good that you will do here. For a man to be worth anything in this world he must live here—have an interest here. He must regard this world as the place where God has put him and wants him to stay, and think and plan and love and labor, until, when his work is done, he shall be summoned hence.

I suppose that dreaming and castle-building with reference to the future life is as bad as castle-building and dreaming with reference to

this life. Says another, "We are told nothing distinctly of the heavenly world except that it is free from sorrow and pure from sin. What is said of pearl gates, golden floors, and the like, is accepted as merely figurative, even by religious enthusiasts themselves; and whatever they pass their time in conceiving, whether of the happiness of risen souls, of their intercourse, or of the appearance and employment of the heavenly powers, is entirely the product of their own imaginations, and as completely and distinctly a work of fiction or romantic invention as any novel of Sir Walter Scott's. That the romance is founded on religious theory or doctrine, that no disagreeable or wicked persons are admitted into the story, and that the inventor fervently hopes that some part of it may hereafter come true, does not in the least alter the real nature of the effort or enjoyment." We often hear excessive novel-reading condemned, on the ground that the habitual novel-reader comes to live in a painted, unreal world of fiction, and hence loses all taste for common, actual life, and plain, unadorned, unromantic duties and events. The condemnation is doubtless just. The habit of day-dreaming, too, and building air-castles is as severely condemned, and for the same reason. Each of these habits emasculates the one who indulges in it. His mental energies expended in this direction, he is, of necessity, correspondingly weak and inefficient in other directions.

But do castle-building and romancing and dreaming about death and heaven and eternity and a far-away salvation any less unfit one, think you, for doing well life's present duties? Is religious sentimentalism any better pleasing to God, or any less harmful to the one who indulges in it, than any

other kind of sentimentalism ? If a tithe of the energy of brain and spirit and heart, which, during all the ages, has been given to senseless and useless dreaming over and theorizing about, nay, and even to so-called preparation for the life to come, had been given to blessing and benefiting men here, to improving their condition politically, socially, industrially, intellectually, physically, morally, spiritually, in this present life, how different would have been the results !

How much more God would have been honored ! How much more perfectly the kingdom of God would have come among men ! How much better each individual man, thus spending his earthly life in actually doing good, would have found himself prepared at death for an entrance upon a higher life beyond this !

You ask, Do not I believe in securing salvation while in this life ? Do not I believe in making preparation while in this world for the next ? I reply, I believe that *the one great work* of this present life is the securing of salvation. So emphatic is my belief on this point, that I even regard a man who has gained anything else whatever, wealth or knowledge or fame or power, and has not secured this, as having made a failure of life. So thoroughly do I regard this world as the true place to make preparation for the next, that I look upon the king, or the most famous man of his time, who has no "treasures laid up in heaven," as being in a less enviable condition than many a man who is not known beyond his neighborhood, and has not a dollar that he can call his own.

But, while I believe all this, I differ very widely and even radically in my idea of what salvation is,

and what constitutes real preparation for the next world, from the idea which underlies all this preaching and speculating about future things, of which I have been speaking. I believe that a good deal which goes under the name of preparation for heaven is anything *but* preparation for heaven. Heaven is a place, or state, or both, of highest happiness. But its happiness grows out of, is a consequence of, its holiness. The only possible way, then, to become fitted for heaven, is to become fitted for the society of the good and the pure, and God, the holy, loving, perfect All-Father—that is, to become one's self good and pure. What would be the right kind of an earthly life for you to live if there were no hereafter? Outline for yourself such a life. A life that would result in the most of good, in the highest sense, to yourself, and in the most of good to your fellow-men, and best satisfy your own conscience, and best answer to your highest ideal of true living. Outline to yourself, I say, such a life. Then know, when you have done so, that you have before you a picture of the kind of life the living of which will be the best preparation you can possibly make for the world to come. Living that kind of life *is* salvation. Salvation is not something that has to do solely or even primarily with the future life. It is a thing primarily of the present life and the present time. Future salvation is to be thought about. But future salvation is simply the necessary consequent and outgrowth of present salvation. If you are endeavoring to live now a pure and moral life; if you are following now the best light you can get; if you are habitually obedient now to conscience; if that command of Christ, to love God supremely and your neighbor as yourself, is now a living law to you, to which you

are earnestly and devotedly striving to conform, then you are saved. The matter is no longer problematic. Salvation has come to you. You may sleep as sweetly at night as an infant upon its mother's breast, for no power in earth or hell can harm you. Dying before the morning's sun, you would find, to your released spirit,

" Heaven open'd wide
Her ever-during gates, * * *
On golden hinges moving."

I am very desirous that we should get a clear idea, if we can, of the real meaning of soul-saving. There is, in many directions, much said about it that is exceedingly misleading. Indeed, I have sometimes queried whether the words "saved" and "salvation" and even "Saviour" had not become so hopelessly woven about by theology with false ideas, that it might not be as well to discard them altogether, and employ in their places words not thus falsified, to convey the meaning for which these were originally used. If, however, we do use them, we should, at least, be careful to strip them of their false theological masks first. It was said of Jesus (when as an infant his name was given him), "He shall be called Jesus—Saviour—for he shall save his people from their sins." Here we have the primary idea of salvation. It is saving from sins; and not saving from sin either as a theological figment, a something that came through another, nobody knows how or why; nor yet saving from sin as a spectral and awful mystery or hobgoblin thing that we can't understand or shun, which always bends darkly over us from cradle to grave, tainting with its awful breath everything we do, by our very birth having a right to us, and waiting, in spite of all our efforts, to hurry us to hell the

moment we die, unless delivered by another almighty one outside of and beyond ourselves, as a sheep might be delivered from a lion's jaws by a powerful hunter.

Such ideas of sin as these necessitate the old theological ideas of salvation, and, of necessity, make Jesus, if a Saviour at all, into the old, unreal, theological Saviour. But such ideas of sin are utterly unwarranted. They do not bear at all the light of investigation, and happily the age is at last beginning to see it. Sin is nothing more than wrongdoing or breaking laws. If I fail in discharge of the duties I owe to myself, I sin against myself. If I fail in the duties I owe to my fellows, I sin against my fellows. If I fail in the duties I owe to God, I sin against God. I am created under laws—physical laws, social laws, intellectual laws, moral laws, spiritual laws. If I obey these laws, I do right or righteously. If I break them, I commit sins. This is the true idea of sin. It is not a figment or specter, but a reality. It is not something that comes down to us from Adam, but something that has its birth in our own bosoms. Salvation from sin then becomes plain. A man is saved just in the degree in which he loves righteousness and hates wrong. A man has attained to salvation just to the extent that his life sets in the direction of obedience to all the divine laws that wrap him about. On the other hand, a man is just so far lost as he is lost to virtue and manhood, and to conformity to God's will, as expressed in the laws and conditions of his being. Let me illustrate. Suppose you have a son. He is going away from home, among strangers and evil influences. You express great anxiety for his safety. What do you mean by his safety? You mean that you greatly

desire that he shall be kept safe—be saved or have salvation (for all are the same word)—from the temptations and vices which will assail him, and which you know, if he yields to them, will sadly hurt him. Now, as I understand it, this is precisely what is to be understood by God's desire that all his children on earth should be saved. He wishes them to be saved from wrong-doing, which is ruin, unto righteousness, which is peace and joy and blessedness and life now and forever.

Or, suppose again, to make the analogy more complete, that your boy who has gone from you, and has been thrown into associations that are debasing, has yielded to temptation and fallen. Your anxiety is all the greater that he shall be saved. But what do you mean *now* by being saved? You mean that you desire that he shall in some way be led to see how wrong and harmful a course he is pursuing, and be brought back out of ruinous evil to the safety of virtue. Just that. The "saving" or "salvation" you desire so earnestly for him is salvation from doing wrong, breaking laws, committing sins, every one of which you know will chastise him with scorpions before he has done with it. This is exactly what I understand our Heavenly Father wants concerning every sinning earthly child of his. He wants him saved from sin, and the sad consequences that inevitably spring from sin, to become a child of obedience and holiness, and hence an inheritor of all fruitions that, in the nature of things, spring from holiness and obedience, first in this world, then in the next.

This is what I conceive to be true salvation. This kind of salvation the world needs as it needs nothing else. Such a salvation is not a theological speculation, but a reality, speaking with an authori-

tative voice to every man, saying, "I am of God." It is with such a salvation as this that Jesus and every true disciple of his goes forth to save man.

It is sad that the Church should so habitually have perverted or overlooked the very first and radical idea of salvation as forever, the moment saving men was spoken of, to point at once to the future world instead of this. It is not the future world that we are first of all to consider when we speak of salvation. The great, all-important subject of consideration for you and me and every human being is, how to save "the life that now is." That saved, all is saved. That lost, the loss is irreparable.

If you wish good health by and by in the years that are to come, you know the true way to insure it is by taking care of your health now. If you would be wise by and by, you know you must improve your time in gathering knowledge and experience now. If you would be respected by and by, you know it is necessary to make yourself worthy of respect now. If you would be good by and by, you must discipline yourself to goodness now, and all the while from now till then. This same relation of things holds good between this world and the next. There is no royal road or short cut to heaven. If you want a heaven for yourself in the world to come, prepare it for yourself in the life that now is. You have no reason to think you will enter upon the next life in anywise changed in character from what you are when you leave this. "He that is holy let him be holy still. He that is unholy let him be unholy still." And the character with which you leave this world will be the slow and natural growth of the years of your whole earthly life, and cannot, in the very nature of things, be the result of anything else, the teaching of any

theology or man to the contrary notwithstanding.

The true conception of human existence doubtless is as *one* in this world and the next: this the rill, that the river; this the dawn, that the day; this the bud, that the flower; this the blade, that the full corn in the ear. Heaven is not something to be won or got or bought, either by ourselves or somebody else for us; but it is something to be grown into. In the next world you are simply your own old self, only moved on and moved up. Swedenborg somewhere gives us a representation of persons who had died, and did not for a considerable time even know they were dead. Their old thoughts and feelings and loves and desires of the earthly life remained, and the world into which they had entered did not at first seem different from the one they had left, only it was spiritual instead of physical. Hence they went on with their old employments, and ran the rounds of their old pleasures. Only by degrees did they perceive their change of states; and that as they themselves became, by natural processes of growth and development, capable of deeper seeing and higher knowledge.

Whether the Swedish philosopher's conception of the next world is true or not, is it not, doubtless, at least more rational, more in accord with the facts of our spiritual nature, more in harmony with the teachings of Jesus, and therefore, in every way more worthy of credence, not to say far more healthful in its influence upon those who hold it, than the views which are so commonly held and preached in Christendom to-day, and which are given such an especial prominence in connection with most so-called religious revivals?

Some excellently well-meaning people seem really to think that the true way to exalt heaven is to debase and slander earth. But evidently nothing could be more false or foolish. How can slandering this life make the life to come one whit better? And if it does not make the life to come any better, neither can it by any possibility honor or please God. Did not God make this life? Is it not his precisely as much as the next can be his? Is it not his will that you should be here now as truly as it can be his will that you shall be in heaven by and by? Is he any less displeased, think you, if now, while you are living here on earth, you slander earth as a "desert drear," and all that sort of thing, than he will be by and by, when you get to heaven, if you slander heaven in a similar way? The fact is, earth is not a "desert drear" to any right-feeling, right-minded person; and if to any it is, then be sure that in nine cases out of ten it has been made so by sentimental and false religious teaching.

Suppose you are a child, and your father has two residences not far apart, say one in the city and one in the country just outside. A part of his family are at one, a part at the other. He himself divides his time between the two as his business may demand, or as, for various reasons, it may seem best. For the present it seems wisest to him that you should remain at the country home. Time goes on. The home where you are is a delightful one. You enjoy it. But by and by I get into your confidence, and begin to whisper in your ears words of disparagement concerning the home where you now are. Then I tell you of the other home of your father's, and institute invidious comparisons, thinking to exalt that by debasing this. Little by little I succeed in

turning your content with your country home into discontent; your appreciation of its charms and excellences into painful sensibility to its supposed lacks; your happy days of delight in your tasks into days of drudgery and longing for the other home in the city; and your former unquestioning, joyous acquiescence in the lot your father has assigned you, into murmurings at what seems to you now, with your false ideas, his strange dealings with you. Think you your father will be pleased with what I have done? Rather he will be indignant, and justly. So, I apprehend, our Father who is in heaven, so far from being pleased, is greatly pained and displeased when any man presumes, before any of his fellow-creatures, to disparage and depreciate this world, where that Father in his wisdom and love has seen fit to give us our present home. Nor do I apprehend that it makes his pain and displeasure much less to see that our discontent is caused by invidious comparisons between our present home and our other home in "the city not made with hands." Draw a line right through the Christian world. Put on one side those who live for this life, to do the duties of the day and the hour, practically to make men better, to accomplish good in every possible way, to forget themselves and bless their fellows; and, on the other side, put those who make it the great and absorbing object of life to save their souls, to escape hell and gain heaven, and what a difference between the two classes! Is there room for any sort of question as to which pleases God best? Nay, is there any sort of question as to which will find heaven's gates open widest to them by and by?

I cannot but remember St. James's definition of religion, which, by the way, is the only direct definition

of religion in the Bible. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father," he says, "is this: to visit the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." No mention is made here of the world to come, but the theater of religion is set down as solely this present life. And this harmonizes precisely with the teaching of Jesus. You will all recollect that striking passage where Jesus goes so far as to represent certain persons as being met at the entrance way to heaven with the words, "Depart! I never knew you. For [on the earth] I was sick and ye visited me not; I was naked and ye clothed me not; I was hungry and ye gave me no food." While others, who had not even thought of gaining heaven, found the gates wide open to receive them, and a welcome the warmest awaiting them, not because they had been trying to save their souls, but because they had been kind and compassionate to their suffering fellow-men during their earthly lives. Surely there is a lesson here, which we shall all do well to learn, as to the true way of making preparation for the world beyond this. Will the time ever come when the Christian Church will cease teaching that the first and great thing to be thought about in this life is to escape hell and get to heaven? It is not. Jesus declared, "He that seeketh to save his life shall lose it; but he that loseth his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." In other words, he that makes it the supreme object of his endeavor in this world to secure his own salvation in the world to come, shall find in that world that he has made a failure; while he who, with large sympathies, has forgotten himself in this world, and lost himself in his care for others, and in doing the work which God has given him to do, will find in the

next world most glorious things awaiting him. It is related of one of the most eminent of English philanthropists, that he was interrogated by one of the evangelical preachers of his day, who was his friend and felt a deep interest in his welfare, as to whether he had taken care to secure the salvation of his own soul. The philanthropist, surprised by the query, replied that really he had been so busy working for others that he had forgotten that he had a soul. And, strange and startling as the reply may seem to us, who have been accustomed all our lives to hear the salvation of one's own soul pictured as the highest object of human thought and effort, I, nevertheless, for one believe that the position taken was essentially the right and Christian one. I believe that there is no nobler man or better follower of Jesus in this world than the man who comes nearest to forgetting even that he has a soul, in his earnest care to be faithful to his daily trusts, and to do good as he has opportunity.

To live in this world primarily to gain salvation is essentially selfish. To be sure, it is selfishness on a little higher plane than it would be if one lived with the supreme object of getting money for himself. Yet it is selfishness nevertheless. The leading thought of such a life is *me, me*, escape from hell for *me*, admission to heaven for *me*. Friends, that is not the spirit of the gospel of Christ. The spirit of the gospel is not getting, but giving; it is not absorption in self, but losing self; it is not *me*, but *you*, God, Christ, truth, my fellow-men, service, love, duty. I have it in my heart to say that securing for ourselves salvation in the world to come is none of our business. I should scarcely be speaking too strongly if I so said. All that is in God's hands. Our part

is to do faithfully our present work, and God will take care of the rest. Heaven, if it come to us at all, will come as the result of our pure and right living, and not as the result of our faithless worrying about it, and our lifelong selfish seeking for it. Strange that it should ever fail to occur to any thoughtful mind that anxiety about death or heaven or hell or any of the things of the next world can have its origin only in distrust of God! Shame on us for such distrust!

Jesus said, "Take no thought for the morrow." Does not this include all to-morrow? As well that supreme and endless to-morrow of the world we have not seen as the mere swift-passing to-morrow of this earthly life?

O friends! will the time never come when we shall have so much of confidence in Him who carries us always in His hand—nay, in His bosom—and who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, that we shall not care to be perpetually withdrawing our eyes from the duties He has given us to do in this world, to make sure that He is going to be kind to us in the next?

Will the time never arrive when our faith in Him will be so perfect that our only anxiety will be to do earnestly and well the work that God gives us to do in "the life that now is," sure, as we are sure of our own existence, that He will take care for us, a thousand times better than we can, of "the life that is to come"?

IN WHAT SENSE IS JESUS A "SAVIOUR"?

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus [Saviour], for he shall save his people from their sins."—MATTHEW i. 21.

VERY few words are more prominent in Christian literature and discourse than the word "Saviour," and its cognate words "saved" and "salvation." But especially do we find this true when we approach the literature and discourse of revivals. Here these words shine out with the distinctness and prominence absolutely of a locomotive's head-light, fairly eclipsing everything else. In evangelical revival meetings generally, the leading object presented for love and worship is Jesus "the Saviour;" and the all-absorbing theme of sermons, exhortations, hymns, and prayers, the one thing urged upon the attention of the people as incomparably more important to be thought about than anything else whatever, is "salvation" or "being saved" by Christ. This being the case, I come before you this morning with the suggestion that we spend an hour inquiring as candidly and earnestly as we can just what these words actually signify; that is to say, just in what sense Jesus is a "Saviour," just how it is that he "saves" men, and with what kind of a "salvation." In matters so important as these we ought to avoid confused ideas, and certainly we ought to avoid false ideas if we possibly can. I do not know how any one can believe more earnestly than I believe in

salvation, and in Jesus as a Saviour, in what seems to me the plainly true and only true sense. But there is so much confusion and misapprehension in the public mind, that when men come to me talking and exhorting about these things, I find myself obliged to stop them and ask them what they mean, whether something real or something fanciful, whether something true or something far enough from true.

"To save" means, according to the best authorities in lexicography, to make safe; to procure the safety of; to preserve from injury or destruction or evil of any kind; to rescue from danger, as "to save a house from the flames." Its synonyms are, "to preserve, to rescue, to deliver, to protect, to prevent." Correspondingly, a "saviour" is one who saves, or makes safe, or preserves from injury, destruction, or evil of any kind, or delivers from danger, or protects from harm. And "salvation" is the act of thus saving, delivering, rescuing, preserving, protecting, from threatened or actual calamity or evil. Very well, then; if Jesus is one who, in any true sense, saves men from some danger, harm, injury, evil, it is in place first of all for us to inquire what is that evil, injury, harm, danger, from which he saves?

To this question I shall reply first negatively, afterward positively. To begin, then, negatively. First, he does not save, and never professed to save, from any *guilt coming from Adam*. And he does not save from such guilt, or profess to save from it, for the good reason, if no other, that there is no such guilt, and cannot be. It is a moral impossibility. To suppose that there can be such guilt is to suppose an utter confusion and perversion of moral laws—an utter overthrow of moral sequences and order. No

man can be guilty for something with which he had nothing to do. For a man to be guilty he must be in some way a party to the wrong deed from which the guilt springs. But men living to-day are not a party to anything which Adam did; and all talk of the theologians about his being the "federal head" or "representative" of the race, in any such sense as to make his act our act; or of our being, as Dr. Shedd and others put it, "potentially present in Adam," in any such sense as to make us responsible for what he did, as they claim, is nothing more nor less than an astounding instance of the substitution of empty words for ideas. Such a thing is unthinkable. That is certainly the most charitable construction we can put upon it. If it be not unthinkable, it is monstrous.

Why, if I am guilty for what Adam did six thousand years ago because he is my ancestor (and that is the ground, if any, on which it is held that we are guilty for his sin), then, much more must I be guilty for wrongs done by other ancestors of mine living nearer to me than six thousand years ago. So, then, if any of my ancestors have been thieves, I have to-day the guilt of theft resting on my soul; if any have been murderers, I have the guilt of murder resting upon me. There is no escape from this conclusion. According to this principle of judgment and action, it would be right for government to punish not only every criminal, but all his children and descendants, for all time to come, for his crime.

Now we all see in a moment that such ideas are simply insanity. They involve an utter perversion of all justice. A civil government or a family attempted to be conducted on such principles would shock the moral notions of everybody; and yet, shall

I say it, there are millions on millions of professed worshippers of God, inhabitants of enlightened countries, who hold to exactly these principles as the basis of God's dealings with men. Conduct which would horrify them, if witnessed in their fellow-men, on no matter how small a scale, they claim God may indulge in on the scale of a whole world, and yet still be worthy of all worship as a just and holy being. No, I say it was no part of the mission of Jesus to save men from the guilt of Adam's sin, for the simple reason that nobody was ever guilty for Adam's sin but Adam himself; as nobody ever was or ever will be guilty for any sin except the committer thereof.

Do you say that the Bible declares that men are guilty for what Adam did? I reply, there are some things which a thousand Bibles—nay, which the proclamation of a thousand angels could never make other than as they are. This question with which we have to do affects the very foundation on which all possibility of Bibles, or revelations, or moral government even, rests. Grant that guilt is something which can be transferred from man to man, that one man may sin, and others in no way concerned in it, and even unborn, may be held responsible and called to account for it, and you have got a condition of things in which Bibles won't help us any; a condition of things in which the less we can know about God even—such a God—the better we are off.

But, then, I deny that the Bible (certainly I deny that the Gospel portion of the Bible) teaches any such thing as the guilt of men to-day for what Adam did, or the guilt of anybody, ever, for anybody's sin but his own. I only wish I had time to take up and examine the leading passages of Scripture bearing

on this point. But the course of thought that I have marked out for myself this morning will not allow it. I must, therefore, content myself with merely, in general terms, making this denial—that there is a single passage in the Gospels, or more truly inspired portions of the Bible, which, under correct interpretation, teaches this doctrine.

Again, secondly, if Jesus does not save from the guilt of Adam's sin, neither does he save from *eternal hell*. In the first place, is it conceivable that men have ever done anything deserving of such punishment as that of an eternal perdition? Is it conceivable that it is possible for men, within the bounds of an earthly lifetime, to do what would merit a doom so inconceivably dreadful? Men talk of eternity as if it were a very brief and almost insignificant thing. But what really is it? Who can think, or even begin to think, endlessness? Stretch the wings of your thought; expand your imagination to the utmost; picture to yourself the longest period of duration which you can possibly grasp, and yet what have you done? Why, you have not yet touched the hem of the garment of eternity. As yet you are just laying your foot upon the first inch of a road that goes on and on and on, beyond hills and mountains and horizons multiplied into utter weariness. Now, is it for a moment to be believed that God could in justice (and if he isn't just, he isn't anything)—is it for a moment to be believed that God could in justice cast men into a hell of torment, for a duration of time such as this that I have indicated, for the wrong-doings of a mere brief earthly life—a life which, compared to that eternity, is less than a single drop to the whole Atlantic, or a single grain of sand to a whole continent, or a single ray to all

the billows of light that fill immensity? And then, moreover, we must not forget that much of the sinning of men in this world is done with many, many palliatives.. Men are ignorant; they do not know the full meaning of sin. They are short-sighted; they do not see the full consequences that may come from their doings. They are frail and erring in their judgments; often what seems a deliberate sin is only an error. They are weak; they sadly fall often when they try to stand. They are, to a large extent, the children of circumstances, made what they are by forces over which they have little control. And now when we take into account all these palliating considerations, together with the brevity of the longest earthly life, surely we cannot but see that an eternity of punishment for the sins committed here would be as utterly out of proportion as it would be to water a violet by pouring a sea upon it; or as it would be to take all the heat from the sun to kindle a rushlight, and thus destroy that luminary for the purpose; nay, as it would be for an earthly parent to burn his child at the stake for laughing when it had been bidden not to laugh.

I say, then, that it was no part of the mission of Jesus to save men from an endless hell, for the reason that there is not and cannot be any such thing to save them from. And here again I claim that I am in no way conflicting with the teachings of the Bible upon the subject, but going exactly in harmony with its teachings. To be sure there are a considerable number of passages which, in our common version, speak of a hell, and use the adjectives everlasting or eternal, or the expression forever and ever, in connection with it; but, I claim, in every case incorrectly. I claim (and on authority the very best and

highest) that the Bible nowhere teaches that God is going to punish any of his children *endlessly*. Here again, if I had but time, I would gladly go into details. But I have not time. It would be idle to make an attempt to discuss the teachings of the Bible on the subject short of an entire sermon.

I can only say, in general terms, that the teachings of the New Testament, and especially the teachings of Jesus, as to the *nature and character of God*, these alone, if there were nothing else, would effectually settle the question forever. If God be just, he cannot, as I have already shown, have decreed that men shall for their earthly transgressions suffer eternal torment. What then shall we say when to his justice we add mercy, compassion, love, paternity, like yours and mine, only incomparably deeper, truer, richer? No, it is not from eternal hell that Jesus saves.

Thirdly, he does not save from *God's wrath*, in any form, or in any true sense. It is supposable that men might be under God's wrath, on account of their sins, even if that wrath were not going to pursue them to the extent of damning them eternally. But even though this were supposable, I contend it is not and never has been the fact. Surely Jesus does not teach anything of the kind. I grant that the Old Testament conception of God—at least the conception of the writers of the earlier parts of the Old Testament—was that he is a being of like passions with men; a being who could repent and change his mind, and who was sometimes jealous and revengeful, and often angry. But the New Testament conception, especially the conception that Jesus himself had, is vastly higher. Jesus represents to us God as not like fallible men, but as perfect in all

things. He is no longer a God who changes his mind, or is jealous or revengeful or from time to time angry. Instead, he is, beyond our utmost conception, powerful, wise, holy, just, and good. Can we conceive a perfect being as angry? Does not anger imply imperfection? Isn't an angry mind a mind in a state other than its highest, its best, its most perfect state?

Moreover, if it were consistent with God's perfection to be angry, still how can we conceive him to be angry with his own children? If I tell you of any earthly parent who is angry with his children, you will think of him at once as something other and less than what a parent ought to be. You instinctively feel that a father has no right to get angry with his child. Shall we then allow ourselves to think of God—our Father—as angry ever with his children? An earthly parent may be pained, grieved, hurt sorely by the conduct of a child. All this is consistent with love, and with all proper paternal feeling toward the child. But just in the degree that anger comes in love dies, and all feelings of true paternity wither. So also we must conceive it to be with God. Pure, true, perfect love is never angry, and never can be, in earth or heaven or hell, in man or God, any more than heat can ever freeze, or light become of a black color; because love and anger are in their very natures incongruities, opposites. But God is love—perfect love. God is a father, a pure, holy, ever-loving, infinitely-loving father. So at least Jesus taught, and taught always, with more iteration, with more emphasis, than he ever put upon any other of his teachings. Where then is there room for anger in God?

There is no room for it. He who says there is

anger in the bosom of God toward his earthly children ever, not only ignores but contradicts the very first and most prominent of all the teachings of Jesus about him. I am not willing thus to contradict Jesus. On the contrary, I for one have no hesitancy in accepting the clear, strong declarations of the Founder of our Christianity, that the All-Father sees with sorrow, but not with wrath, the sinning of his children on the earth, and, even in the case of the most hardened and profligate of them, stands all the day long waiting for their return, ready at any moment to meet them while yet a great way off, and receive them back with joy and great rejoicing.

I say then that Jesus had it for no part of his work to save men from God's wrath. True, sinning men doubtless have reason, in a deep and real sense, to fear God. But it is not his anger that they have reason to fear; it is something very far removed from that, viz., it is his justice; and not his justice in the theological sense either, but his justice as revealed in the naturally and inevitably harmful consequences of the breaking of wise and right laws, moral and other.

But, if Jesus undertook to save men from none of these things mentioned, neither from guilt imputed to them from Adam, nor from an eternal hell, nor from God's anger in any form—the things in which the Christian Church has long taught his salvation primarily to consist—then from what did he undertake to save?

Coming to the positive side of the subject, I answer: He undertook to save men from just those evils which were most severely pressing upon, most bruising, most fearfully crushing down their spirits and actual lives; that is to say, he undertook to save

men from real evils, and not from such merely imaginary or speculative ones as the theologies would have us believe. In other words, his salvation was intensely earnest, intensely practical, intensely of the present time.

It was a saving of the man himself, in all that makes up his entire being. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose himself?"

1. To be specific, Jesus first of all sought to save men from *ignorance*.

He was painfully conscious that men were in darkness, especially as regarded the whole realm of moral and spiritual truth. He went about as a light, teaching ever and everywhere—sowing the truth broadcast with a hand that never tired or withheld. And so earnest was he in this that he enjoined it upon all his followers that they should constitute themselves lamps to shed abroad further still the light which they had caught from him.

The particular kinds of ignorance which he was most earnest to dispel from men's minds were two: first, ignorance about God, and second, ignorance about themselves. And oh! what a mighty work did he accomplish in both these directions! What revelations he made to men concerning God! What revelations he made to them concerning themselves! What a work would Jesus have done for the world if he had accomplished nothing else than teaching the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men! What salvation the revelation of these truths alone would have been!

2. But, furthermore, he sought also to save men from *fear*. This is involved really in salvation from ignorance, for ignorance is the mother of fear. Yet practically the two may be spoken of separately.

Look at the world as it was when Jesus came into it—full everywhere of fear of supernatural powers. Everywhere altars were smoking to propitiate vengeful deities. Storms in the heavens, and storms on the earth, were all works of the displeasure of these deities. Such a thing as disinterested love to men on the part of God was scarcely dreamed of. The great and almost only thought was to gain the favor or avert the wrath of the awful beings above, by contrivances, penances, propitiations, purchases, atonements, often of blood and great suffering. Men feared to die and feared to live. The heavens were brass over their heads. The future was dark as night. No infinite Father bent over the world in mercy and love; but, instead, above all were vengeful, jealous, dreadful powers. Now from all this Jesus sought to save men. These unworthy, horrible beliefs about God he dispelled. The dark curtain which superstition had hung before men's eyes he tore away, and bade them see God not as a being to be dreaded, cowered before, propitiated by suffering and blood, but a being to be loved and adored; not an infinite Moloch or Jove or Thor, but the embodiment of all that is highest, worthiest, best. Thus fear was slain. With no longer dreadful deities, but a Father at the head of all things, what was there longer to fear? Oh! the transformation! Oh! how the shadows lifted! How the night fled away! How the sunshine came in, and with it joy and hope! Life was no longer the same life. The world was no longer the same world. Fear, which before had hid in every cloud, and lurked in the shadow of every bush, and whispered out of every sound, and beset men behind and before from cradle to grave, was dead, and assurance and peace came in its place. And

this was an essential and important part of the salvation which Jesus brought to men. Friends, was it not in so far a real salvation? Was it not a salvation glorious, priceless in value, worthy of him and of the God whom he worshiped? True, a large part of Christendom to-day will not have it; but persist, in spite of all that Jesus did and said, in clothing God in garments of darkness and immoralities and wrath, and in nursing in their own breasts, instead of joy and hope and trust, the old doubt and trembling and fear. Alas for them! But the fault is not with Jesus.

3. Finally, and most important of all, Jesus sought to save men from *sinning*. Not only did he seek to save from ignorance, moral and spiritual, with all that that involved, and from fear, with all that meant; but more earnestly still did he seek to save from the awful guilt and tyranny and consequences of sinning. He looked about him, and everywhere he saw his fellow-beings doing, oftenest thoughtlessly, but often deliberately, things that they knew to be wrong—wrong toward themselves, wrong toward their fellows, wrong toward God. The sight pained him most deeply. He knew that this wrong-doing was withering men's souls, stealing from them their birthright, feeding the beast but murdering the angel that was in them. Could he not do something for them? He would try. Here was man's deepest ruin. Here it was that more than anywhere else the race needed and must have rescue. Jesus would give his life to the work of seeking to save the lost. He would go forth among his sinning brothers, and by every eloquence of love persuade them to abandon their wrong-doing. He would go down to the lowest and vilest, and dedicate what strength

the Father should give him to lifting up his fallen brothers into holiness of life and purity of heart. Long ago, to his yet virgin mother, said the legend, an angel had announced his birth, moreover commanding beforehand that his name should be called Jesus—Saviour—because, promised the angel, “He shall save his people from their sins.” So he would live and die with the mission supreme in his heart to save his brothers, not simply from moral and spiritual ignorance, though this were much; nor yet from dark fear and distrust of God alone, though this were much; but, most important of all, from sinning.

But, do you ask, how would he do this? How did he actually undertake to save men from sinning in his day, and how does he save men now? If you would discover, you have only to look about you, as Jesus looked about him. You see men sinning on every hand, as he saw men sinning on every hand. Men are much the same now that they were then. Sin is essentially the same thing now that it was then. Men have to be saved essentially the same way now as then. How are men saved nowadays from unholiness to holiness, from evil lives to good lives, from wrong-doing to right-doing, from sinning to purity of thought and action? *That* is the vital question, if you would understand Jesus and his work as a Saviour.

There are at least three potencies which may be employed in this saving of men. These potencies have always been operative and always will be. They are instruction, example, and love.

First, *instruction*. Men need to be taught the nature of sin—its essential ugliness, wickedness, and hurtfulness to all with whom it has to do. If men can only

be made to understand it, and see it as it is, much has been done in the direction of getting them to abandon it. Men will hardly embrace a serpent when they really see it to be a serpent. They will hardly put their hand into the fire when they know they will be burned if they do.

The second powerful instrumentality in saving men from sin is *example*. It is strangely easy and natural, seemingly, to do what we see others do. Whether there is any sense in it or not, whether it will benefit us or harm us, it often makes comparatively little difference; if only others about us do it, we do it. So great is the power of example. Said a recent English writer: "You want your neighbors to sweep their doorsteps. Don't go and ask them, but simply go quietly and sweep your own. In a day or two your next-door neighbor will notice that yours is swept, and will sweep hers. Then your neighbor on the other side will notice your step and the step next on the opposite side clean, and so she will sweep hers. Thus the contagion will spread; and in a little while, without a word said by anybody, all the steps in the neighborhood will be swept." Now, this power of example is a mighty potency, more mighty than is often dreamed, to be employed in the work of saving men from sin.

The third instrumentality in saving men is *love*—pure and worthy love. Let me deeply and truly love a good person, and that love will be an influence of immense power, ever drawing me back from evil, and urging me in the direction of goodness. Probably there is no greater saving potency acting in society than this.

A talented, but wild, idle, morally worthless young Englishman fell in love with a pure, cultured, noble

young woman of a highly excellent family. That love saved him. Restored to his right mind by the healthful power of it, he renounced his idleness, threw away his wine, deserted his gay companions, went away to Edinburgh University, took every prize for which he was allowed to compete, came back, married the young lady whose love had transformed him from an idle rake into a man, and, under the inspiration of her purity and worth, rose to be one of the greatest philanthropists and most honored men of England. Such is a single illustration of the saving power of a pure, high love. I care not how low men may be sunken in sin, if I can get them to love, and love upward, I have hope for them. Those cords of affection reaching from the heart out and up to purer, worthier beings, will have a power to save that can scarcely be over-estimated.

Now how did Jesus undertake to save men from sinful to holy living? I answer, in precisely the ways just indicated. Precisely by laying hold of each and all of these three moral potencies which I have pointed out. First, he taught men; second, he set them an example; third, he loved, and won their love. What more could he do? What more needed he to do? Here we have the three mightiest levers possible to be used for the moral and spiritual elevation of human beings. And with what power he employed each and all of the three!

He taught men, as they had never been taught before, the nature of sin; how foul and useless and hateful to God, and necessarily damning to men it is; and the nature of holiness; how fair and right and beautiful and blessed to men, and well-pleasing to God it is.

By example he wooed men. What an example it

was he set, both to his own and to all succeeding times! How it shines to-day! Never was the beauty of holiness and the divineness of unsullied, genuine manhood set forth with such power as in his life. Never did the ghastly ugliness of sin so clearly appear as when contrasted with the singular purity and perfectness of his character. He drew all eyes unto him while he lived. He is doing so still. Thus have arisen the beginnings of new and nobler life to untold millions of the human race; for who can ever be quite the same again after having once really looked upon that marvelous life of Jesus?

But not only did he teach by word and inspire by example; he also, as I have said, completed his work by laying hold of men's hearts with the well-nigh irresistible power of a great, burning, purely unselfish love.

Oh! the potency of that strange something which we call love! Who understands it? Who can measure its heights and depths, or tell the strength of its unseen chains, even as it exists in the most ordinary of human beings? What, then, shall we say of a love like that which must have throbbed in the great heart of Jesus, and shone out from his every act and word and look? I confess it seems to me nothing marvelous at all, that that love of Jesus caught and kindled to a flame, as it did in the hearts of his disciples, and from them caught again in the hearts of others, and ever perpetuated itself and widened as time went on. And can any one fail to see what a measureless potency for salvation there is and forever must be in such a love?

But enough. Time forbids that I should go further. I have answered, as well as the brief space of a single sermon will allow me to do, the questions with

which I set out—In what sense is Jesus a Saviour? From what and how did he undertake to save men?

I have answered that the salvation which he labored to effect was not (*a*) from the guilt of Adam's transgression; nor (*b*) from an eternal hell; nor (*c*) from the wrath of God in any form or sense. It was, first, from moral and spiritual ignorance; second, from fear, especially fear of God; and third, and most important, from sinning.

And to effect this salvation for his brother men, he employed three instrumentalities: (1) teaching or truth; (2) the power of example, the example of a pure and noble life; and (3) love.

And it was by the potency of these instrumentalities that he accomplished what he did in his own day, and set in operation the influences which have worked so mightily for human salvation since. In other words, these are the channels, as I conceive them, through which he wrought out the grand work which gave him a right to the name of Saviour.

And now, friends, I appeal to you, have we not here a sense in which the salvation of Jesus becomes a thing of reality; a thing which we can see reason in; a thing which we can lay hold of; a thing of true grandeur; and no longer, like the commonly received idea of salvation, a thing of mysticism, a speculation, an unreasonable and really God-dishonoring thing—spun out of the metaphysical brains of Augustine and Calvin and Edwards, and foisted on the Christian Church in ages darker than ours? With these views, have we not in Jesus a Saviour worthy of the best achievements of our Christianity; a Saviour who commends himself to every thinking human mind, and every loving, reverent human heart?

But the question is asked me, If these views be true, is Jesus the world's *only* saviour? I answer, by no means. Were he the world's only saviour, transcendent as has been his power for good, we should all be in a sad condition to-day. For where then would be all the array of noble men and women of the past, who have made all the ages glorious by devoting their lives to the same objects to which he so self-forgettingly and so heroically devoted his life? No! Rather every one, in all lands and times, who has done anything to lead up the race out of ignorance and superstition of fear and sin, into greater light and hope and holiness, has been, in the deepest and only true sense of the word, a saviour, and as such has labored side by side with Jesus.

Is Jesus the world's greatest saviour? I can only reply, I believe he is. Most or all of you who hear me to-day believe he is. The more civilized portion of the world with almost a unanimous voice have pronounced him to be. This, then, for our purpose, at least, is enough. Surely this makes it right and fitting that we should call him to-day *the* Saviour, and give him honor and reverence and love as such now and evermore.

SOME RELIGIOUS LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM SCIENTISTS.

“Honor to every man that worketh good.”—ROMANS ii. 10.

TO-NIGHT, as has been announced, we listen to the first of a series of six popular scientific lectures to be delivered on successive Sunday evenings in this church. As introductory to these, it has seemed to me that I could not do a more appropriate or useful thing than ask your attention this morning to some religious lessons which I think are to be learned by our age from science and scientists. I have long been convinced that there is no necessary hostility between religion and science. Nay, more than that, I have long been convinced that, on the one hand, science has no better friend than true religion, and, on the other, that true religion has no better friend than real science. And when I see science and religion clenching fists, or scowling, or even looking coldly at each other (sights which, I regret to say, we are all called upon to witness on every side and almost every day), for one, I cannot but feel that the condition of things is strangely and most lamentably wrong. In the first place, I always very strongly suspect that the party which does the fist-clenching or the frowning, whether it be religion or science, really isn't the genuine thing, but instead is a pseudo-religion or a pseudo-science, and hence feels, with good reason, that the opposite genuine thing is antago-

nistic to it. Or, if it be itself the genuine thing, then I more than suspect that the thing which it does its frowning at isn't genuine. It sees something wearing the garb of science or religion, which it takes to be a foe, and so throws itself into an attitude of antagonism, crying out, "Science, you are all of the devil," or, "Religion; you are all a debasing superstition," and strikes out with fierce, blind blows. But if it only would be patient and penetrating, and not show fight until it had time to look underneath the garb, it would find that its opponent is not what it calls it at all, and so it would be saved the trouble of fighting, or, if it did fight, it would no longer do so in a foolish way, as one who beats the air, or in a self-injuring way, as one who beats a stone.

Genuine science and true religion, seeing clearly, eye to eye, discern in each other no antagonism. Heaven speed the time when they shall come to see eye to eye, as only to a very limited extent they are able to yet. I would not supplant the teachings of Jesus or Paul or David by the teachings of Tyndall or Darwin or Agassiz. Such supplanting to any considerable extent would, I think, be lamentable. But I would, if I could, *supplement* the teachings of Jesus and Paul and David by the teachings, and what seems to me the moral and religious teachings, of these men of science.

And first of all in the direction of *love for truth*. Of course it is true of scientists, as of all other classes of men, that every flock has its black sheep. There are persons claiming the name of scientists who are mere partisans, mere special pleaders, who plainly care nothing for truth as truth, but only for their own pet theories about the truth, whose writings and lecturings are as one-sided as a single half of a

pair of shears detached from the other half. But these are the exception, and by no means the leading and representative scientists of the age. The men who have won their way to the front ranks of science, and who are recognized by scientists themselves as authorities, are far different men. They are, as a class—and every intelligent and unbiased mind will bear me out in saying it—men of not simply average, but of really extraordinary, candor, fairness, devotion to truth; so much so that it seems eminently fitting that they should be held up and pointed to by every one interested in the teaching of morals and religion, as, in this particular at least, men to be honored and imitated. I think there is something about original scientific investigation calculated to make men fair and truth-loving. Scientific investigators understand in the beginning, and in all their researches they are finding out if possible more thoroughly still, that nothing but truth will stand, or is in any respect worth a straw. Facts are facts; they won't change themselves one iota to please any man, or to accommodate any theory. They are stubborn as mules; and would just as lief kick over the most magnificent hypothesis or generalization as not. So that every scientist knows that the only hope there is for him that his work will endure, rests upon the condition of its being absolutely truthful work. Facts and realities, the things which actually are, form a foundation of rock and an edifice of granite; but anything else forms a foundation of sand and a superstructure of cobs. Why then should not the scientist be a man whom we should expect to find as candid and honest and truthful as any man in the world—a fit man to be an example in these things to us all?

Said Professor Tyndall, in introducing Professor Huxley at Belfast, at the time the latter gave his celebrated lecture on "Animals as Automaton" before the British Association, "I do not know what my friend's message to you will be to-night, but this I do know, that it will be the message of a man loving truth above all things." Could there be higher praise? Said Niebuhr, the father of modern historical science, "We must preserve our truthfulness in science so pure that we must eschew absolutely every false appearance; that we must not write the smallest thing as certain of which we are not fully convinced; that when we have to express a conjecture, we must strenuously endeavor to exhibit the precise degree of probability we attach to it. We must ourselves indicate our own errors where possible, even such as it is unlikely that any one will discover. When we lay down our pen, we must be able to say in the sight of God, 'Upon strict examination, I have not knowingly written anything that is not true, and have never deceived, either as regarding myself or others; I have not exhibited my most inveterate opponent in any light which I could not justify upon my death-bed.'" Noble words of a noble man! and a man, too, who is not an unfair representative, I am glad to believe, of the leading scientists of modern times.

I do not think the writings of any other man have so impressed me, by their exhibition of candor and sacred regard for absolute fairness and precise truth, as the writings of Mr. Darwin. Is the position of an adversary to be stated by him? It is stated with the greatest possible carefulness, that there may be no unfairness of representation. Is an attempt made to prove a position of his own? Not only are the argu-

ments in its favor enumerated, but, also, with the greatest fullness and fairness, those which militate against it; and you are asked to make up no verdict, except in view of all the facts that can be obtained on both and all sides. I have often thought that he is, if possible, even more careful to state fully and in their strongest light the arguments which weigh against his own positions, than he is the arguments which weigh in their favor.

Now, such a trait of mind as this in any man is admirable, and cannot be too highly appreciated and commended. Gladly do I hold it up in a Christian pulpit and say, "Let us all emulate it." Whether we are prepared to accept Mr. Darwin as right with regard to that particular scientific theory which bears his name or not, I see no reason why we should not at least gladly receive him, in so far as this point under consideration is concerned, as a teacher of morals and religion. To learn to be as religiously fair and honest and truthful as Mr. Darwin, would be a great grace in any man. Nor, as I have intimated, is Mr. Darwin peculiar in this thing. On the contrary, you may almost measure a scientific man's eminence by his conscientiousness and fidelity to truth. I only wish that the eminent religious leaders and teachers of our times were as truly disciples of Jesus in this thing as are our scientists. But I have a fear that, as a class, they are not. Unquestionably some of them are as honest and truth-loving as men can be. But I have a bitter fear that, weighed in the balance with the men who have given their lives to searching in the darkness and quarrying in untrodden wildernesses for truth, and who, from the chaos of ignorance and superstition which a little while ago was, have built the orderly and beautiful cosmos of

science that now is,—I say I have a sad and bitter fear that, weighed in the balance with these men, our religious teachers of past and present, as a class, would be found wanting in this matter. As devotees to sects and theologies; as exponents and defenders of views and doctrines and systems of doctrine, in most cases unquestionably believed to be true, doubtless our religious teachers have been and are unsurpassed. But in devotion, not to this or that aspect or branch or view of truth, but to truth as truth, in all its breadth, and left free to lead where it may, I have little doubt in my own mind that, hard as it is for us to make the confession, we, as religious men, must in honesty make it, that the laurel crown belongs of right to the scientists and not to us. To learn this part of religion, viz., honesty, candor, fairness to opponents, regard for exact truth, devotion to truth wherever it leads, there is scarcely room for question but that it is more fitting that we should go and sit at their feet, than that they should come and sit at ours.

Another lesson that we, as religious people, would do well to learn from the scientists is, the lesson of *patient and earnest devotion to work*. St. James says, "Let patience have her perfect work." I know of nowhere that patience comes so near to having her perfect work as in the building up of science. The patience and perseverance and devotion to labor, seen in a large proportion of the promoters of all branches of science in this and the past ages, have been astonishing—scarcely less than heroic. Here is a man who dedicates his life to enlarging and perfecting the science of botany. What does that mean? It means giving up all dreams of wealth and luxury, and even to a considerable extent of comfort. It

means, in large measure, isolation from society; much absence from home and family; traveling on foot, amid hardships and privations, over States, countries, continents; and, withal, toil in the retirement of his study more continued and severe than any but the few who have been admitted inside the circle have the faintest conception of. And all that he may add something to the stock of human knowledge. It is a noble devotion.

Another sets for himself the task of finding out about that wonderful department of creation—the birds. And what do we see? We see him, like Audubon or Wilson, virtually taking up his abode in the forest; and for whole decades of years hardly knowing what it is to meet civilized men, or taste the commonest comforts of a civilized home. Another devotes his life, with equal ardor and patience and self-abnegation, to the study of so small a thing as the bee, and with results of vast benefit to the world. Another, still, chooses chemistry, or some small department of chemistry, and toils on indefatigably in his laboratory, year after year, unknown and uncared for by the great world, little by little the wrinkles coming into his brow and the silver threads into his hair, and at last, very likely, passing away almost as unnoticed as the falling of a tree in the woods; but yet content that it should be so, because he is able, by this patient toil and heroic devotion—I had almost said immolation—to leave behind him, if not a name, what is better, some additions to his dearly-loved science.

And this is the way that the splendid edifice of our modern science has been built up—by a patience, a perseverance, an earnestness, a self-forgetting and quiet devotion to work, which are as admirable as

anything of the kind that the whole history of the world has to show. Now, these are precisely traits of character which Jesus and Paul commended as going to make up perfect character. Why should not we also recognize them as such? Why should not I, as a Christian teacher, and why should not you, as Christian men and women, often and earnestly hold up these men of science, who so nobly illustrate these characteristics, as examples to be religiously admired and imitated?

Another lesson which the scientists are doing, perhaps more than any other class of men, to teach this age, and which many of us as religionists would do well to let them teach us, is the lesson *that there is something better to live for than merely to gain pecuniary wealth*. When Professor Agassiz was approached by an eminent so-called practical man, and urged to turn his remarkable talents for scientific lecturing to account in accumulating a fortune, what was the business man's surprise on being replied to by the man of science, "But, my dear sir, I have no time to waste in making money!" "No time to waste in making money!" Said President Andrew D. White, in speaking of this declaration of Professor Agassiz: "I have stood in the presence of a very eminent man of affairs, one whose word is a power in the great marts of the world, and watched him as for the first time he heard this astonishing dictum. He stood silent, apparently in awe. The words seemed to reverberate among the convolutions of his brain, and to be re-echoed far away, back, from depth to depth, among the deep recesses of his consciousness. 'No time to waste in making money!' The thought was a revelation to that man, as it has been to a great many other men." It would be hard

to point to any utterance of our times that strikes such a numbing, staggering blow at the sordid materialism and mammon-worship, which is so much the characteristic and bane of our age and civilization, as this grand declaration of our American scientist. No time to waste in making money! Something infinitely better to live for than to get rich! That is precisely what Professor Agassiz and the thousands of others who were his co-laborers in science have been teaching us, and constantly and forever teaching us; not simply by the utterance of their lips, but by the far more eloquent utterances of their whole lives. Taking for their text the words of Jesus, "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment," no preachers of modern times have preached more powerfully, nor, as I believe, more effectively than they. Is it not time that we, as religious people, gave them due recognition and honor for it?

Another religious lesson, which I think the scientists of modern times are well qualified to teach us all, is that of *sincerity*. Another still is that of *thoroughness*; but upon these I will not enlarge. The lesson of *bravery* or *moral courage*, too, I think we may well go to them to learn. I know of no braver men—brave on the highest plane of bravery—than the long line of martyrs to science which history tells us of. Some religious martyrs have doubtless shown a bravery as great, and endured a martyrdom as noble. This is as much, however, it seems to me, as truth allows any one to say. The religious martyr of the best type may be placed side by side with the martyr of science of the best type; but as to placing him one whit above, I think the time has passed by for that. Both die for truth;

both die for conscience' sake. Who shall say that one is nobler than the other? Vastly enriched will Christianity be in its inheritances from the past, when it shall have added to its roll of saints all men who have lived to do good, and to its roll of martyrs all who have died for truth. Bravery! Moral courage! No class of men on the earth, except it be the advanced rank of religious thinkers, have had to fight anything like so hard a campaign, so long a campaign, a campaign against such odds, as have scientists since the day science had its birth until now. Well has a recent writer called the campaigns of a Cæsar, a Napoleon, a Moltke, absolutely petty when compared with it. Bravery! If old Roger Bacon was not brave; if Copernicus and Galileo and Kepler and Giordano Bruno and the early astronomers were not brave; if Andreas Vesalius, the founder of the modern science of anatomy, was not brave; if Boyer, the introducer of inoculation as a preventive of small-pox, and Jenner, the discoverer of vaccination, were not brave; if the pioneers of geology and ethnology and every other science have not been brave, then is there no bravery to be found on the earth. Now, bravery of the kind which these men exhibited, bravery on the high plane of the moral, which manifests itself in battling for freedom and right and truth, is something to be commended and cultivated as an element of perfect character. No religion is perfect which does not teach it. It is eminently Christian, if by Christian we mean what Jesus by lip and life taught; for when did the world ever see a braver soul than the Teacher of Nazareth? The kind of bravery exhibited by these men whom I have named, and by the men who have fought the battle of science generally,

has been precisely of the kind exhibited by Jesus—bravery against conventionalism and superstition and error and for the truth. Why, then, shall we honor him, and not in their degree honor them? Or why in him shall we call his bravery one of the seven colored rays which go to make up the white light of his religion, and in them allow a similar bravery no connection with religion at all? No, if the man, perfect after the measure of the stature of Christ, is of necessity a morally brave man—a man always and everywhere brave for the truth and right, then I have no hesitancy in pointing to the long line of men whose good brain-swords have won from the empire of night the whole realm of our modern science, and saying, “Learn from them how to be religiously brave.”

A final lesson which I think we may all learn from the scientists is the lesson of *faith*. Of course not, if by faith we mean what seems to be so often meant by it, mere believing without evidence or reason, mere blind credulity. Science neither teaches nor tolerates anything of that kind. For that kind of faith we must go to so-called religion. But if by faith we mean a belief which is based primarily upon evidence; a belief which is the consummate flower of knowledge; a belief which does no shutting of eyes, but which instead stretches its vision to ever higher and larger things; a belief which is only widest-seeing, clearest-seeing, furthest-seeing; if that is what we mean by faith (and nothing poorer or less than that ought we ever to mean by it), then I claim, without hesitation or fear, that religion, so far from branding science as skeptical and atheistic, as we find her constantly doing, may well herself go and sit down at the feet of science and learn faith. The history of religion has been a constant fear; the his-

tory of science has been a constant hope and trust. We cannot go back to the time when religious men were not apprehensive lest some new light of knowledge might in some way be harmful to religion. Every step of the onward march of science, as Dr. Draper has shown in his volume on "The Conflict between Religion and Science," and as President White has shown, perhaps better still, in articles in the *Science Monthly*, has been made in the teeth of opposition from religious men. Physical geography, astronomy, chemistry and physics, anatomy and medicine, geology, meteorology, cartography, industrial and agricultural science, political economy and social science and scientific education have all had to fight their way against powerful and persistent religious opposition. What was the secret of this opposition? It was not that there is anything in science that is necessarily anti-religious. It was simply the faithlessness of religious men. Just that. The men who opposed science and every incoming of new knowledge lacked that true and large faith which the scientific men have as a rule all the while had, that high and holy faith which sees truth and goodness to be inseparable, and which believes that He who planned all things has forbidden any earnest search after knowledge to lead to lasting evil. The religious teachers who have been forever charging the teachers of science with skepticism have themselves been the skeptics, in that they have not believed, as the scientists as a class have believed, that there is "a Power in the universe strong enough, large enough, good enough, to make thorough search for truth safe in every line of investigation." Nor are things more than partially changed in this matter now. Every intelligent man knows it to be true

that to hold to-day certain scientific doctrines—doctrines, moreover, which the ablest scientists of the world have either adopted or else seemingly are fast working their way toward adopting, is to place one's self under the religious ban, not only of Catholicism, but of a large part of Protestantism. For example, call a man a Darwinian, or a disciple of Herbert Spencer, and, in this good year, 1876, you shut pulpits against him; you shut lecture courses against him; you shut college professorships against him; and even there are cases where you shut places of public and political trust against him. I speak what I do know. Now what does such blind prejudice against new scientific doctrines mean? It means at bottom skepticism. That is the most rational and the most charitable explanation I can give of it. It means at bottom nothing less than a fear that somehow religion is going to suffer from the revelations of science. Can any one give any other explanation? If our religious teachers and leaders had sufficient faith in God and truth—if they really and with all the earnestness of their souls believed, as one of our American scientists has said, "that there is a Power in this universe strong enough to make truth-seeking safe, and good enough to make truth-telling useful," and this always and everywhere, would they maintain the attitude to science that so many of them do?

So then you see what I mean when I say something so strong, and I confess, at first thought, so seemingly strange, as that I think that religion may well go and sit at the feet of science to learn lessons of true and real faith.

Listen to Tennyson, the great poet of nature and science:

“ Oh ! yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

“ That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
 That not one life shall be destroyed,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile complete ;

“ That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
 That not a moth, with vain desire,
 Is shriveled in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

“ Behold ! we know not anything ;
 I can but trust that good shall fall,
 At last—far off—at last to all,
 And every winter change to spring.”

I ask, Have we not here as grand and real faith as can be found voiced in literature ? And did not the great Laureate drink it a great deal more from nature and science than from the popular theologies of the Christian world ?

These then, friends, are a few of the lessons which, I think, as persons who care for real religion, we may learn, and ought to learn, from those, on the whole, truly noble men, whom God, in his all-comprehending providence, has raised up, to give to the world, from him, the priceless legacy of modern science. Other lessons still might be mentioned ; but these are, perhaps, as important as any. Do not understand me as for a moment desiring to teach that science is religion, or that science can ever take the place of religion. By no manner of means. The province of religion is one ; the province of science is quite another. The functions of religion are one ; the functions of science quite another. But the Author

of these two is the same, and they are both friends. Rightly understood, religion and science can no more be enemies than my eyes and my ears can be enemies, or than my perception and my reason can be enemies. This, friends, let us believe and know. This let us rest in with great peace and hope. And if we really do believe this, I am sure I see not anything that will seem to us sadder than the sight of religious people looking out upon science and the great leaders of science with hostility or suspicion or fear. As if there were danger that religion could not stand light! As if there were reason for apprehension lest the great spiritual verities upon which religion founds itself, and with which it has to do, may prove intangible and fade away under investigation! Ah! religion means more than that. Did you ever look upon a mountain at night? Under the dim light of moon and stars its outline was more or less confused; it was a vague and shadowy thing; it seemed to you as if at any moment it might take wing and fly away. Surely under the light of the sun it would vanish into thin air and nothingness. But ere long the night passed away, and the light of moon and stars gave place to the light of the dreaded sun. Did the mountain disappear? Instead, its outlines grew sharper, every feature about it more distinct. Instead of fading away with the light of day, it grew a thousand times more real. So history teaches us it has ever been with religion, in all its experience in connection with science. Ever the mistaken friends of religion have clung to the moonlight and the starlight, and said, "Let not the sunlight come." And as they have seen the rays of a day of larger knowledge, whose sun is science, streaking the east, they have trembled.

But all without reason. For He who made the sun made the mountain also. And the brighter the light has shined the more plainly has it appeared that the mountain was not a phantom, but a real thing, with its outline ever clearing, and its foundations firm as the earth.

CHICAGO, February, 1876.

DARWINISM AND RELIGION.

“I will trust, and not be afraid.”—ISAIAH xii. 2.

THERE is an old story somewhere of a man's hanging on the edge of a precipice, through the dark hours of night, believing that if his grasp failed him he would be instantly dashed into a thousand fragments. At length his strength would hold out no longer, and he fell—only to discover that his feet had been all the while but two inches from the ground! The precipice was the creation of his own imagination, and his long agony had been thrown away. I think we have in this story an admirable illustration of the condition that the religious world is constantly finding itself in with regard to the progress of the age. Ever and anon the cry is raised that religion is in danger from the developments of science. Particular facts are brought to light that do not harmonize with the preconceived notions of the Church; or some scientific theory is announced which the theologians have not taught, and which was evidently not known to the writers of the Bible. A great commotion is created. The champions of the theologies whet their swords. The cry is at once raised that Christianity is in danger, and all good men are summoned to the rescue. From the representations of the fiery opponents of the new heresy it would be scarcely extravagant to regard the cause of religion

on the earth as hanging on the edge of a precipice which unholy science had maliciously created, and about to fall and be utterly destroyed, unless her friends rallied vigorously to her aid. But somehow religion has always managed to live through these periodical scares. After more or less protracted times of darkness and agony the supposed precipices and perils have been found to be only figments of unbalanced imaginations, and really the falls that religion has experienced, when it was unable to retain its grasp longer on the crumbling crags of its old superstitions, have only brought its feet upon firmer ground than they had ever occupied before.

First came astronomy, and took the earth from its place in the center of the universe, with the sun and stars revolving round it, and only existing to be its great bonfire in the day and its candles in the night, and assigned it, instead, a subordinate place among the planets of *one* of the numberless systems that inhabit space. It was a terrible blow to the old ideas to have the earth, dignified by being the dwelling-place for thirty years of the incarnated Creator himself, as it was held, suddenly shrink from being the grand center of all things to a mere speck on the outer rim of creation. Nevertheless religion stood.

Then came geology, undermining the Mosaic cosmogony as given in Genesis, and showing that the earth was not six days, but millions of years in creation, and that during those millions of years it passed through changes and transformations and processes of development which the account of Moses cannot be brought to harmonize with without such distortion as would turn the entire Bible into sibyl's leaves, and make all human language a chaos. The battle was long and severe. The friends of religion, so

called, rallied against the infidel, and fought with a vigor and perseverance worthy of a better cause. Nevertheless, little by little they have had to yield. And at last we may say that the contest is virtually ended. Geology, in its great facts and general principles, is accepted. And still religion lives.

These two great battles mentioned are only the most prominent among a large number of similar ones which the past has witnessed between theology and science. To-day, as you know, several distinct battles of the same kind are going on. One is on the ground of scientific criticism of the Bible. Such names as Baur and Straus and Renan and Colenso and Ewald, and our own Professors Norton and Noyes, are well-known names in connection with this contest.

Another battle now waging is on the ground of comparative religion, as is testified by the works of Max Müller, Dr. J. Freeman Clarke's "Ten Great Religions," Samuel Johnson's recent work on "Oriental Religions," Professor W. D. Whiting's volume on the "Veda, Avesta, and Science of Language," and other works of the same character multiplying rapidly from the press. But, beyond question, the battle which has been raging for the past ten years more fiercely than any other is the battle against what is known as Darwinism. It is this battle that I wish to-day to approach, blow away a little of the smoke, if I can, and see, with you, what cause of apprehension there may be or may not be for the issue. I shall not attempt the championship of either side. I have no desire for any part in the contest whatever. If any of you who hear me have made up your minds that Darwinism is true, or that it is not true, I have no controversy with you. The truth or

falsehood of it can be settled, not by the notions of the people about it, or their choices concerning it, or declamations in pulpits for or against it, but only by the slowly and carefully formed verdict of the scientific world. Moreover, it is a subject upon which those who have studied most thoroughly, and consequently are best qualified to judge, are as yet by no means of one mind, although it must be confessed that it is rapidly growing in favor. It becomes candid people, therefore, who have not time and scientific attainments to take part intelligently in the contest (as very few have), to wait patiently until the verdict is rendered, and then accept it cheerfully and without apprehension; sure that truth, whether it coincides with our desires and pre-conceived notions or not, is always safe.

First of all I shall inquire briefly, What is Darwinism? Second, What does Darwinism involve with reference to orthodoxy? Third, What does it involve with reference to religion?

First, then, what is Darwinism? Of course most of us know; and yet, for the sake of clearness and completeness, I will state its leading thought. Darwinism is one branch or department of the great doctrine of evolution; which doctrine of evolution is the doctrine that creation was not the work of a day or a week or an age; or performed at or during any specific time, and then left off as completed; but that creation has been going on, by a gradual process, from a time indefinitely far back, and is going on still. In other words, the doctrine is that the world and the universe were not *created* at all in any such sense as we generally conceive. They were rather evolved according to certain laws. A plant is not created or made, as we generally understand the

words; but it grows, by a gradual process, and under the direction of certain well-defined laws, from a simple seed or bulb or germ. A crystal is not created, as we usually think of the word. It forms by slow deposition or aggregation obediently to the well-known laws of crystallization. So evolutionists hold that the universe has come to be what it is by an inconceivably extended process of development, or unfolding, under definite law, from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from the simple to the ever more and more complex. First the universe existed as a vague, indefinitely extended fire-mist. This, set in motion, tends to aggregation and separation into parts. The particular part which comprehended what is now the solar system, revolving, condenses, and, in accordance with the law of universal gravity, forms Neptune, the outermost planet of the system, with its satellites; then Uranus, the next in order of remoteness, with its satellites; then the next and the next, until at last, in the center of the system, the sun himself is formed. The earth, when coming into separate existence by this process of condensation, is first a dense, fiery gas. By the attraction of gravity, tending to draw all parts to a common center, and by the cooling of the mass, it gradually shrinks and becomes a liquid, and at length a partially solid body, as now. Then, when the ocean has become of a temperature to admit of it, and land has appeared, forms of simple vegetable life begin to develop, and later, animal life. This development goes on slowly and yet steadily, until the earth becomes what it has become, and man at length appears upon the stage, the last, best, highest product of all that went before. This I say is, in brief, the doctrine of evolution.

The name of Darwin has become associated especially with a single section of this doctrine, viz., that which treats of the relation of species to each other; asking the question, whether higher species of life, animal and vegetable, may be developed from lower; and leading up, of course, to the final question of the origin of man; taking the ground that man had his origin, not in a direct creation of Omnipotence, from the dust of the ground, but that he became man by a process of natural development, inconceivably slow and almost infinitely long, through successive forms of life. Not but that the general idea of man's origin through such development had been held and urged long before Mr. Darwin. But Mr. Darwin, for the first time, pointed out the laws and conditions of this development. Before him, it was a mere theory, having little basis but speculation. But Mr. Darwin came forward enunciating two great laws—the laws of natural and sexual selection, which, by an overwhelming array of facts, he proved to be real laws, and, as he contended, powerful and wide-reaching enough to account for all or nearly all the steps of progress from the brute to the human being. His books certainly form an era in the department of science in which they fall, whether it shall be finally decided that they adequately explain the origin of the human race or not. They are remarkably calm, clear, and candid, and they are crowded with facts that cannot be evaded. It would be hard to conceive of a doctrine as subjected to more silly ridicule and empty-headed abuse than this of Mr. Darwin has been. But those men who have studied it most carefully, in the writings of its author, are, as a rule, either converts, or at least respectful opponents. They recognize in Mr. Darwin a strong and earnest

man of extraordinary scientific knowledge, and with a love of truth for the truth's sake that is as extraordinary as his breadth and thoroughness of information. He is no mere iconoclast or vandal or speculative adventurer; but a self-poised apostle of science, sincere and brave; withholding no blow that truth demands, and striking no blow that does not tell; a worthy coadjutor of such men as Tyndall and Faraday and Huxley and Carpenter and Spencer. So much, then, for the answer of our first question—What is Darwinism?

Second. I proceed now to my next inquiry, What is involved in Darwinism, so far as orthodoxy is concerned? To this I answer, there is a *great deal* involved in it, so far as orthodoxy is concerned, and that is the reason why orthodoxy has fought it so fiercely. Dr. Tayler Lewis, one of the most learned scholars and able champions of orthodoxy in this country, in a letter to *The New York Tribune* on the subject of Darwinism, only a few weeks ago, said: "The creation of the first man by the direct fiat of the Almighty, without any intervening causes, is the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, on whose truth the whole Christian system rests, and by which it must stand or fall. If that is not true, Christianity is not true." Of course the learned writer meant by Christianity orthodoxy; and substituting, therefore, the word orthodoxy for the word Christianity, what he said is undoubtedly true. "The creation of the first man by the direct fiat of the Almighty, without any intervening causes, is the fundamental doctrine of *orthodoxy*, on whose truth the whole orthodox system rests, and by which it must stand or fall. If that is not true, orthodoxy is not true." This being so unmistakably the condition of things, is it any wonder

that the orthodox fleet, from the first appearance of Mr. Darwin on the scene, should have cleared decks for action, never letting the boom of their guns cease until the present moment? If man, instead of having been created by the direct fiat of the Almighty, as Genesis has it, has developed from lower forms of life, then, of course, there could have been no Adam, no Eden, no fall of the race in Adam; and, as a consequence, any system of theology built upon the theory of the fall, as the present orthodox system is, must be built upon a myth and not upon a reality. If it was "in Adam's fall that we sinned all," and if the guilt and condemnation of the race and need of a Saviour and Redemption come from that fall, as our orthodox and evangelical friends say, how immensely important it becomes that they should hold fast to Adam, and not let him nor his fall slip out of their hands! And when a scientific theory comes along proposing very coolly to take away the fall, Adam and all, as Darwinism does, what can they do but fight it? Either this, or else give up, let their theology go overboard, and turn heretics with us liberals. This is precisely the strait that adherents of the orthodox theology find themselves in to-day, with reference to Darwinism.

Of course I do not mean to be understood as saying that if Darwinism comes to be generally accepted, orthodoxy will not find some way of explaining things, some process of so-called reconciliation, between itself and the new scientific doctrine, which will enable it to continue on with some outward show of plausibility, claiming for itself a place still in men's belief. There is nothing more curious in history than the facility which orthodoxy has always shown of reconciling itself with whatever, after a hard

battle, it has found itself unable to overthrow. And in this case, as in so many before, we shall, in a little while, doubtless, see it offering to lie down by the side of Darwinism, as meekly as if the two had always been twin lambs. However, the thinness of this kind of thing begins to appear after a while; indeed, it has begun very plainly to appear already. These reconciliations are fast becoming the laughing-stock of the scientific world, and, indeed, of the world of intelligence generally, outside of the theological circles. Surely they can't be tolerated much longer by anybody who reads and thinks. It can be only a matter of time when a theology which deals in them as a staple article with it must go to the wall, and when another, which is reasonable and friendly to science and all new truth, shall take its place as the theology of the better part at least of the Christian world. And, friends, when the old dogmatic system does fall, believe me, it will certainly be found that Darwinism gave it one of the most severe blows it ever received. Thus much as to the relation of Darwinism to orthodoxy.

Third. We come now to our third question, What does Darwinism involve in relation to religion? Earnest and well-meaning people, whose knowledge of Darwinism comes principally from its enemies, are constantly heard asking in all seriousness such questions as these: Does it not involve the giving up of the Bible? Does it not degrade man to the level of the brute? Does it not deny the existence of the soul? Does it not annihilate all prospects of a life beyond the grave? Does it not virtually dethrone God and enthrone law in his place? Does it not involve the overthrow of religion, and even virtue? I say, good men and women all about us are actually

asking, in all seriousness, every one of these questions, with reference to this theory of Mr. Darwin. And that it does do all these things, if admitted to be true, is charged by its opponents in the religious world. Let us look at the more important of these questions, one by one.

1. Does not Darwinism involve the dethroning of God, and the setting up of dead law in his stead? I reply, a man might, doubtless, be a Darwinian and an atheist, as he might be an anti-Darwinian and an atheist. But, for one, I see no shadow of a reason why a man may not with perfect consistency be a Darwinian and a devout believer in the Infinite First Cause and Father. Mr. Darwin holds that men have become what they are by a process of development; but he does not seek to remove God from that development. Does it any less require a God to make a tree to become a tree by a gradual growth of fifty years than it would to create the tree at once full size? Is it necessary for me to deny that I have a creator, because I believe that I developed to my present size and strength from a small and helpless infancy? So, is it necessary to deny the existence of God, or that God is the Creator of all things, because we believe that all things have come to their present condition through a marvelous process of evolution? Indeed, is not the very idea of God which makes him a God of law, a God of order, a God of magnificent, never-resting, all-comprehending progress and on-moving of all creation toward some higher, and, as yet, uncomprehended destiny, a nobler and more honorable conception of him than any to which the world has hitherto attained? Surely that is a singular intellectual condition which sees, in the pushing back of the history of the earth

from six thousand years to millions, or in the enlarging of the bounds of the universe from our own little planet to the limitless realms revealed by modern astronomy, or in the changing of creation from an arbitrary act accomplished in six days to a wonderful process comprehending all space and all time, and all things—man among the rest. I say, it is a singular intellectual condition that can by any possibility see in this a denial of the existence or creatorship of God.

2. Granting, then, that Darwinism does not necessarily involve a denial of God or of his potency in creation, does it not involve a denial of the existence of the soul, and, consequently, does it not turn into an impossibility the life beyond this world, and make this present state the all of existence to man? I answer, I do not see that it involves anything of this kind; for it does not attempt to investigate man's nature at all, whether he is this or that, or whether his destiny be this or that. The ground that it proposes to investigate is not metaphysical or theological or inclusive of the spirit world. Rather, taking man as he is, as we all see him and know him, it asks the simple questions, How did he come to be what he is? Was it by a single, sudden act of creation, or by a process of gradual development? Nothing less nor more than that. And may not man be an immortal spirit just as well if he came to his present condition by one road as by another? Is there any particular virtue in the dust of the ground, so that he should be more likely to be immortal if made out of that than if he developed from the most intelligent of the brute creation? Why may we not argue just the other way, and say, the higher the origin from whence he sprang the higher nature and destiny we have a right to claim for him? And surely an origin from other

forms of animal life is higher than an origin from "red earth," for the word "Adam" means "red earth." No; if coming to be what we are as a race, through development, prevents our having souls, and destroys our immortality, then it must be that coming to what we are individually, you and I, by development, prevents our—your, and my immortality, and possession of souls. For, whatever may be said of the race, you and I did come to be what we are by development; this nobody can deny. And we have developed into men and women from forms of life vastly lower, too, in intelligence, than apes and monkeys and gorillas. Indeed, we can scarcely conceive of a living thing with less intelligence than a new-born babe. And if from an infant that literally does not know anything—not black from white, not an object a mile away from an object within arm's reach, not a living person from a dead thing—splendid intellects and immortal souls may develop, who shall say that the development of the race as a race from animals well-nigh as intelligent now as some men, and a thousand times more intelligent than infants, involves a loss of man's immortality, and the impossibility of his having a soul distinct from his body? Nay, more than that; if, in order to be possessed of a living soul and an essential immortality, there must be sudden creation, then the only immortal persons and the only persons with souls that have ever lived on the earth were Adam and Eve. For they were the only man and woman created, according to the old idea of creation. All the rest came to manhood and womanhood by a development far greater, in the increase of mental, spiritual, and even bodily powers it involves, than Darwinism claims for the race as a race.

No! I conceive that the theory of Mr. Darwin does not touch the question of man's spiritual nature or immortality at all. Or, if it does, I do not see but it is to be regarded as quite as much in favor as against. The truth is, man is what he is, no matter through what channel God saw fit to give the race its beginning. It does not in the least, in any true theory of judging, change your or my individual character or ability or worth or standing in society, whether our ancestors, five centuries ago, were cobblers or kings. No more does it affect the standing or worth of the race before God, or in any way change their character or nature or spiritual possibilities, whether they sprang, five hundred or five thousand generations ago, from monkeys or oysters, or, what is really the lowest and most humiliating origin of all, the dirt of the ground in Eden, as claimed by Genesis and the theologies.

3. But does not Darwinism involve at least giving up the Bible? I reply, That depends upon what you mean by giving up the Bible. If you call the ceasing to ascribe a miraculous infallibility to it, giving it up, then Darwinism evidently does involve giving up the Bible; for, as I have said, its fundamental idea is that man came into existence, not by a single and sudden act of creation out of the dust of the earth, as the Jews supposed, but by a wondrous process of development, extending back through unnumbered ages; and that ever since he became man he has, by the great law of the "survival of the fittest," been slowly and painfully, but, on the whole, steadily, rising and improving; instead of having been, as the author of Genesis thought, created perfect, and lapsed subsequently into imperfection and degradation. It is evident that the conception which Darwin

has of man's creation, history on the earth, and nature, is radically different from that taught by many of the writers of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament. So that, I say, if you call the admission that there are scientific errors in the Bible giving it up, then Darwinism does involve the giving up of the Bible.

But if you hold, with many of the wisest and best and most deeply religious men of our time, that the Bible neither justifies nor claims any such theory of infallibility concerning it, and that its worth and authority are entirely independent of any such theory, then Darwinism does not involve the giving up of the Bible at all. Darwinism refuses to take the Bible as in any sense a text-book in science; but there is nothing about it that would in the least degree encourage a disparagement of the dignity and power and worth of the Bible, or that would at all tend to diminish true reverence for it as the great, unequaled, or, if you please, unapproached religious book of the world. The prophets of the Old Testament still remain the sublimest moral characters of ancient times. David's psalms still continue the finest outpourings of a devout soul that come down to us from the early world. John is as sweet and loving and love-inspiring as ever. Paul stirs and energizes the consciences of his readers as much as ever he did. And above all Jesus remains the same incomparable teacher and the same inspiring personality that he has been found from the beginning to be, whether Darwinism triumphs or fails. In short, I do not conceive that Darwinism involves the denial or giving up of any single thing essential to religion. It does not take away God, nor any of his attributes—his power, his wisdom, his eternity, his goodness,

his love, his personality, his providence, his creatorship, his paternity. All these remain untouched and complete.

Nor does it affect human nature. We are what we are, and nothing else, whether we came from oysters or angels. It does not affect our duty or destiny. The obligations that lie upon us all, humanward, are just the same. The obligations that lie upon us Godward are not changed. Our outlooks and possibilities and inheritances for the world to come are unaffected. I do not conceive that it disturbs any spiritual thing. Indeed, why should we expect or even in the slightest degree fear it would? Do we not believe that the world of spiritual things rests on a basis of truth? And do we have any apprehension that truth is in any danger of overthrow? Darwinism will not stand unless it is proved true. And if it is proved true, need we fear that one true thing will prove dangerous to another true thing? Have we not yet attained to the height where we can believe that God is the God of *all* truth?—holding each separate truth in his hand securely as he holds the separate stars in his hand securely?

It is saddening, and humiliating too, to think that the religious world has not yet, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, got beyond the necessity of having a panic over every new development of science which seems to oppose the necessarily crude scientific ideas of the early Jews. We are told, in the book of Samuel, of a man who, fearing lest the ark of God should be overturned, when it was being moved on a cart over a rough road, put up his hand to steady it, and was for his impious fear struck dead. I apprehend that if all those who, in these times, fearing the "assaults," as they are called, of science,

put up their hands to steady the throne of God, should be struck dead, there would be such weeping and mourning in the religious world as was never seen.

If there is anything that we are *not* to be afraid of it is the truth. And if there are any sincere and careful and sure-footed seekers for the truth now living; nay, if the ages thus far have ever produced such seekers for the truth, they are the scientists of the present day. What interest have these scientists in Darwinism, only so far as it is proved to be true; or, for that matter, any particular scientific theory? If anything on earth has to run a gauntlet of drawn swords, and pass through an ordeal of fire, it is a new scientific doctrine. A thousand Argus eyes are watching. A lamb pounced upon by a hundred eagles would scarcely fare worse than a scientific man fares who advances a theory that the facts do not sustain. When Darwin came forth in the scientific arena with his new doctrine, it was as a solitary swordsman to be rushed upon by an army, every man of whom would do his best to hew him to pieces. If he shall not be hewn to pieces, it will be because his armor of self-defense and his sword of offense are truth. Nothing else can save him.

This battle, as every similar battle of the past, must go on on the basis of science. And while it is going on, it is as foolish for religious people to get frightened and rush in with their exhortations and denunciations and texts of Scripture, as it would have been for the women of Pennsylvania, alarmed for the safety of their State, to have rushed into the conflict of Gettysburg with their brooms. Not but that religious people have as much right, in this or any other contest where truth is involved, as unre-

ligious people. They have as much right. Only, if they come in, they must come in with the weapons of facts and proofs, and not with the broomsticks of their old prejudices, or want-it-to-be-sos, or mere beliefs, or references to Jewish notions of three thousand years. And, fought out on the basis of facts, verities, conscientious investigations of all things, we need have no fear.

Rabbi Gamaliel uttered a sentiment more than eighteen hundred years ago which only a small part of the Christian world are up to to-day. "Let alone," he said, "for if this thing be of men it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found fighting against God." Let this be our assurance, amid all the heavings and tossings of the scientific, speculative, theological thought of the times. That which is of men only will assuredly come to naught; that which is of God will assuredly stand.

I have read that in the waters of the West Indies, "on a dark night, in a time of strife, an English ship of war once drew near what seemed a hostile vessel under full sail. She hailed the stranger, who answered not; then hailed again; no answer. Then fired a shot across her bows, but still no reply; next fired at her amidships, but got no word in return. Finally, the man-of-war cleared for action, began battle in earnest, serving her guns with true British vigor; but found no response save the rattle of shot rebounding and falling back into a heedless sea. Daylight came, and the captain found he had spent his powder battering a great rock in the ocean."

Friends, how often has it been the case in the world that good men and the Church of Christ have been found firing their heaviest broadsides at some

supposed form of hostile error; and lo! afterward, when the night of vagueness had gone, and the morning of a better intelligence had come, it was found that the supposed enemy was not an enemy at all, but a great God-planted rock of impregnable truth!

It may prove so with Darwinism; or, for aught we know, it may not. But this we know, that neither thunder of hostile battle shot nor dash of devouring wave can disturb the real rock of God's truth, wherever that be. The false will fall; the true will stand. Therefore in this controversy, as in all others, where much that is holy and dear to us all seems to be at stake, let us put our hand in the hand of God and be calm and confident.

CHICAGO, March, 1876.

SOME BOOKS AND AUTHORS THAT HELPED ME FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM:

A CHAPTER OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

[From the *Unitarian Review*.]

“THE Life and Letters of F. W. Robertson” fell into my hands immediately after the publication of the work. It was at the close of a vacation, the whole of which I had spent wrestling with doubts and questionings over things which I had been taught to believe were the very fundamentals of religion. I had read half a dozen volumes on the evidences of Christianity, and all the other books I could find that held out any hope of being able to give me light or rest; but all to little purpose. Attempts to get help from conversations with friends had failed, and worse than failed. I went back to college. One more year of study remained before I should be ready to enter upon my divinity course. The anxiety with which I looked forward to that year, it may well be conceived, was intense; for I felt that, unless light came to me before its close, I could not conscientiously enroll myself in a theological seminary as a student for the ministry. True, I was known already as preparing for that work. Indeed, the church of which I was a member had seen fit to license me to preach, and I myself had gone so far as several times to occupy pulpits. All this, of course, greatly increased the pressure that was upon

me. Somewhat before this time my attention had been called to Mr. Robertson, and I had been greatly fascinated by his character and such of his writings as I had seen. But, on my return to my studies, the newly-published "Life and Letters" fell almost at once into my hands. Truly they were a godsend. I think I never read any book with such eagerness and delight. They were food and drink to me for weeks, nay, for the whole year. When the next summer came, thanks to these volumes more than to any other one agency, I was no longer in doubt as to whether I could conscientiously enter the theological school. Not that my doubts were gone. Not that he had brought to me a solution of all the problems that troubled me. Not that he had discovered to me a system of theology that by any means fully met my wants. But he had done much for me.

First, he had taught me not to let my doubts concerning some things cause me to let go all. I must discriminate; I must set stakes; I must "strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." Naturally, doubt is contagious. Tolerated with reference to one thing, it tends to communicate itself to others. This is unquestionably the *dangerous* thing about doubting, that it is liable to degenerate into general skepticism. But Mr. Robertson was a great believer. He doubted widely and profoundly, but not half so profoundly or widely as he believed. He drew the lines carefully but firmly round about those things which were fixed and beyond doubt, and set his feet upon these as upon an eternal rock. There was no negative, indifferent, or essentially skeptical condition of mind ever to be found in him. He only doubted because he must, and so much as he must, and so long as he must. He doubted, that he might

believe more intelligently, more really. The fact that he found himself compelled to doubt concerning some things, only made him hold the more firmly to all things concerning which he was not compelled to doubt. The lesson he taught me in respect to this was invaluable. I shall never forget the impression made upon me, the first time I read it, of this powerful passage from an address delivered by him before the Workingman's Institute of Brighton: "It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props upon which it has blindly rested so long are, many of them, rotten, and begins to suspect them all; when it begins to feel the nothingness of many of the traditionary opinions which have been received with implicit confidence, and in that horrible insecurity begins also to doubt whether there be anything to believe at all. It is an awful hour; let him who has passed through it say how awful. * * * In that fearful loneliness of spirit, when those who should have been his friends and counsellors only frown upon his misgivings, and profanely bid him stifle doubts which, for aught he knows, may arise from the fountain of truth itself; to extinguish, as a glare from hell, that which, for aught he knows, may be light from heaven; and everything seems wrapped in hideous uncertainty, I know of but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scatheless: it is by holding fast to those things which are certain still, the grand, simple landmarks of morality. In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, these at least are certain. If there be no God and no future state, yet, even then, it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward. Blessed be-

yond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks. Thrice blessed is he, who, when all else is drear and cheerless within and without, when his teachers terrify him and his friends shrink from him, has obstinately clung to moral good. Thrice blessed, because *his* night shall pass into clear, cloudless day." That passage rang like a bell in my soul from the moment I read it. It was a voice of God. I am not aware that any other passage, from lip or pen of human being, ever did so much, in times of my deepest need, to hold me in moral and spiritual poise, to keep me from any tendency to drift into indifference, recklessness, epicureanism, the deadly "habit of doubt," as this.

Secondly, Mr. Robertson taught me that the most fearless searching for truth, and the stoutest doubting, may consist with the purest character, the noblest life, and, what is more, the profoundest piety. Up to this time I had never been able to break away from the dominance of that idea, which is the strongest bulwark of orthodoxy, that to doubt is sin. In all the teaching I had ever received, from Sunday school and pulpit and religious literature, no idea had been more steadily and uniformly insisted upon than this. This dogma, therefore, had long been my most galling chain. For, the stern, inevitable fact was, I did doubt. Many of the teachings of orthodoxy were such that, as the years went on, and I came to look into them more carefully, I simply *could* not, by any effort, believe them. I was absolutely compelled to doubt concerning them, or else stop thinking. What a relief, therefore, came to me in reading the life of one who had found himself driven into doubts almost identical with my own,

and yet who had struggled through them all to firm faith, with his conscientiousness, his devotion to duty, his adherence to truth, his love, his reverence, his piety, only purified and strengthened by the struggle! When I closed these precious volumes, I breathed free as I had never done before. A weight, heavier and more crushing than I can tell, had gone from my soul. I no longer believed that honest, earnest doubt or questioning was sin. I *could* not, with the life of F. W. Robertson before me. From that time I saw that the noblest heroism may be the heroism of doubt; and that the truest following of him, who proclaimed himself "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," may, and often must, lead through what to the superficial on-looker seems fearful skepticism. The name of "rationalist" became no longer the hideous thing it had been before. The word "infidel" lost much of its terror. "Skeptic" and "heretic" came to have entirely different significations from what they had formerly had. And how could it be otherwise, when I saw on every hand, throughout the whole English-speaking orthodox world, the epithets "heretic" and "skeptic" and "rationalist" and even "infidel" heaped in mountains upon one whom I found myself compelled to pronounce loyal to Christ, and all that Christ and Christianity stand for, as few men have ever been loyal? From that time forward to the present day, more and more I have habituated myself to ask concerning any charge of infidelity or rationalism or atheism, or anything of the kind, made against any man, "From what source does it come?" before daring to allow it to have even the weight of a hair against him.

For much else am I indebted to Mr. Robertson;

but I have said enough for my present purpose. Doubtless my judgment is somewhat biased by the great service he has done me, but I cannot regard him as other than one of the very greatest and most truly inspired of religious teachers. If any man in our times has looked into the deep things of God, if to any has been vouchsafed the "Vision of God," if any has found the Holy Grail, it seems to me it is he.

"This earth he walks on seems not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
This air that smites his forehead is not air,
But vision."

Strange as it may seem, I have to name, as next after Robertson, in value of service rendered me in helping me from darkness to light, Mr. Ruskin. I became a reader and admirer of Ruskin's works about the time I first made acquaintance with Robertson. From that time for five years there was no author I read more. I can describe only very inadequately how he helped me. Indeed, for a long time I was scarcely aware that he was helping me. But now, as I look back over the road I traveled, and analyze carefully the influences that wrought, openly or secretly, to bring me to the position which I at last reached—from the old bondage to the final freedom, from the night to the morning—I can clearly see that the writings of the great "Prophet of Art," and of more than art, must have a leading place. I think his influence upon me was much the same as Carlyle's, only more tonic. Carlyle always thrilled and stirred me wondrously; but, so far as distinctively Christian principles are concerned, he always left my feet standing on thin air. Not so with Ruskin. His teaching has ever seemed to me exactly Christian; and yet, particularly in his later

works, it is Christian in a sense far more harmful to so-called "orthodoxy" than open anti-Christianity would be. It is true, Ruskin made his fame as a writer on art, and most of his works have been on art, or, latterly, on political economy. Only one of all his books, and that a very small and in every way inferior one, has a religious subject. Yet, after all, no writer of our times is more essentially religious. He carries the religious spirit into art and political economy and everything else he touches. He is a born prophet. He is the Hebrew Elijah transplanted into the midst of the finest culture of this nineteenth century, and set to the business of art-criticism, plus the (in his eyes) still more important business of righting the evils generally of modern society. Granted that he is impulsive, inconsistent, passionate, in many things impracticable, and a very Don Quixote; still it remains none the less true that he is one of the most finely cultured, original, penetrating, brave, sympathetic, sternly honest, reverent, and in every way powerful of writers. He is a terrible iconoclast, wielding a perfect Thor hammer against the conventionalities and popular idols of the day. Yet, after all, he is as full of the spirit of admiration as of the spirit of destruction; as appreciative and worshipful of everything that seems to him excellent, as he is savage against everything which seems to him false and unworthy.

Whatever his influence morally and religiously has been upon the age (and for one I cannot believe it has been small), at least upon me I am sensible it was important. I think no writer ever revealed to me with such power the strange folly and sin of all that range of things found in the churches, which may be characterized as "tithings of mint, anise,

and cumin," to the neglect of "the weightier matters of the law, the judgment, the mercy, and the faith." Many and many a thing in connection with religion, which I had previously held to with the utmost tenacity, as something vital, I found myself, after reading him, little by little letting go of, and first becoming surprised and then ashamed that I had ever held to it, seeing so plainly as I did now, under his tuition, how evidently it was only a bit of "mint" or "anise," of ceremonial or symbol or creed, and not at all an essential thing in Christianity. This I am sure is one of the ways in which Ruskin helped me from bondage toward freedom. No other author ever made me feel as he did the infinite meanness of theological squabbles, sectarian shibboleths, church flummeries, and all those things which lie on the surface of religion, but touch not its divine heart of love and worship. Finally, I think he did more than any other writer to impress me with the fact of the almost necessary poisonousness of all established "orthodoxy." I mean, with the fact that, just so soon as any system of truth has got itself thoroughly formulated, and has battled its way, through one means or another, to general acceptance, and so has reached the position where it labels itself as "orthodox," and, assuming the purple robe and scepter of authority, sits down for the receiving of unchallenged homage, it has got to the point when, whatever it may be theoretically, practically it is false and not true, slavery and not freedom, death and not life; and this all the same whether it be a system of art or philosophy or ethics or religion.

The writer who was next most helpful to me, after Robertson and Ruskin, was George Macdonald. His

little work on the "Miracles of Our Lord" gave me some light. His charming little volume of "Unspoken Sermons" I read with sensible profit, especially the sermon about "The Consuming Fire." But it was his novels that did most. These, as they fell upon my path, seven or eight of them in succession, during the three years of my theological study, and the year following, were oil upon troubled waters, or rather a very divine hand, which, just because it conducted me in peaceful, quiet ways, where scarcely more than the faintest echoes of polemical fifes and drums were heard, was able to do not a little, as I can see now, to lead me forward to accept and rest in the liberal faith of which Mr. Macdonald, in all his published books, is so effective a preacher.

I think he was helpful largely, perhaps mainly, as painting for me in clear outline, at the time when I had become thoroughly dissatisfied with the old, and yet had not attained to a distinct view of a better new, the kind of religion that I had long in darkness been groping after. As I read his pictures of a Christian minister's work, in the "Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood," and of Christian home life, in "The Seaboard Parish," and his portrayal of such Christian characters as David Elginbrod and Robert Falconer, I found myself constantly saying to myself with delight, "At last I have found one who has represented almost exactly my ideal of true Christianity; one who has written out for me, in orderly form, my confused dream of years." In this respect his influence with me was much the same as Robertson's.

I confess it seems a little strange to me that the three writers whom I find myself compelled to mention first in this paper, as being most helpful to me

in finding my way from "orthodoxy" to "liberal Christianity," should be men none of them controversial or distinctively theological writers, and, at least, two of them ministers in so-called "orthodox" churches. I think the natural supposition would be, that, of course, it would be some of the well-known champions of the faith into which I have come that would influence and assist me most. And yet, when we come to look carefully, I think we may discern two or three reasons why it should have been as it was.

In the first place, truth is deeper and broader and more subtle than any logic can ever be. And especially is this the case with religious truth. I think that most men of deep religious nature, or keen religious intuitions, have always a sort of instinctive feeling, even when they have built the strongest possible wall about any system of religious truth, that after all, somehow, something more is needed; the wall they have built is only an inadequate reliance, a thing that, though it now looks firm and strong, may yet, ere they know, melt away into thin air. Who that has thought and felt at all profoundly, has not found that attempts to pack away any best religious truth in formulas and dogmas and systems, though the attempts may accomplish something, and doubtless something useful sometimes, yet, after all, are but too likely to prove, in the main, mere futile efforts to lock up sunshine in oak chests? The moment it is locked up, it is no longer sunshine.

I think it was a slight tinge of this distrust of argumentation, and the logical method of getting at truth, that operated, in part, to keep me from receiving that aid from the polemics of the faith toward which I was advancing, which it might have

been expected I would have received from them ; and that opened my mind and heart to receive the same truth from prophets and seers like Robertson and Ruskin and Macdonald, who did not so much argue as announce.

But there was another reason, more important still, why such men as these last named were able to help me more than perhaps any of the out-and-out liberal writers.

I suppose it is natural for the human mind to put itself in an attitude of defense whenever it comes into the presence of a known enemy. Certainly, I always found myself putting myself more or less distinctly on the defensive whenever I came into contact with a theologian of known liberal views. The reason for it is plain.

My earnest desire was to remain in the church and the faith in which I had been reared. My friends were there, my associations were there, my hopes were there. I only began to doubt concerning that faith by degrees, and as I was driven to it by my own mental necessities. Naturally, my reading and thinking would, for a long time at least, have for their leading object the banishing of these doubts, and the strengthening of the old foundations. For years I read almost exclusively orthodox writers, with the hope and expectation that I should be able to dissolve my doubts, and find peace and rest in the old theology. It was only natural, therefore, that when I took up a book in theology of a liberal character, my mind should assume a hostile attitude, and so place me in the most unfavorable possible condition to be affected by it. To be sure, as I came to be aware of this fact, I tried hard to guard against it, and I am sure to a measurable extent succeeded.

But yet human nature is human nature. I do not conceive it to be within the bounds of possibility for the human mind to be quite as clear-visioned to see what it wishes not to see as what it wishes to see. Forever the desire influences the judgment, guard we against it never so strongly.

This, then, was probably the leading reason why openly liberal writers, such as Unitarians, Universalists, and Free-thinkers, did not assist me more, especially in the early part of my struggle. I met them in arms. But when I came to men who wore the name "Orthodox," and were connected with orthodox denominations, it was very different. Then my mind instinctively in large measure laid aside its antagonism. They were not so far in advance of me but that I could reach their hands. And eagerly I stretched forth my hand and took theirs, fondly hoping that they would be able to conduct me to ground within the enclosure of the beloved old faith, where I could find rest. It is what writers have in common with us that gives them their hold upon us. So it was what these men had in common with me that gave them their hold upon me. If they had been further advanced, they would have been able to help me less. They started me toward liberty, they unchained my feet, they taught me that I might think. But this done, and done thoroughly, the rest would almost certainly follow in due time.

My little child, as is natural, is afraid of a stranger or a strange animal. But I find that having been in my arms a while in the presence of the stranger, or having played about for a time, under a nurse's care, in sight of the strange creature, she loses her fear, and will approach one or the other with perfect calmness. So men who stand within the pale of ortho-

doxy, and yet are so heretically liberal as many are to-day, know not how many infant "rationalists" they are playing the nurse to. Certainly, it was some of this class of men who carried me in their arms, and held me by the hand, until I had grown so familiar with the sight of freedom and sincerity in thought and inquiry that it was impossible for me ever to be afraid again.

So much, then, for the three writers that, as I think, did most for me in my years of mental struggle. I would not, however, have it understood that others, and many others, were not of very great service to me. Going back to the very earliest, I am not at all sure but that Combe's, in its time and way remarkable and masterly little work, on the "Constitution of Man," read and reread by me with profound interest when a mere boy, was the original egg from which the "viper" of my subsequent "rationalizing" was hatched. Coming down to time later, "Ecce Homo" was a book that took hold of my mind with great power. I read it and studied it, and made a careful and extended abstract of it. I think it was the picture that work gave me of Jesus that, more than anything else, first started me in the direction of distinctive Unitarianism.

Dean Stanley was of great assistance to me; so were Maurice and Jowett and others of the English Broad Churchmen. The life and writings of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, did me especial service in more ways than one. Then, when I was prepared for them, came Channing and Dewey and Noyes and Hedge and Clarke and Martineau and Theodore Parker. These all rendered me invaluable aid in completing the work which the others had so well begun.

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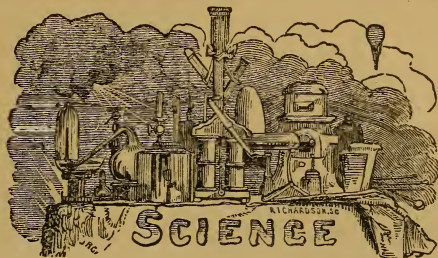
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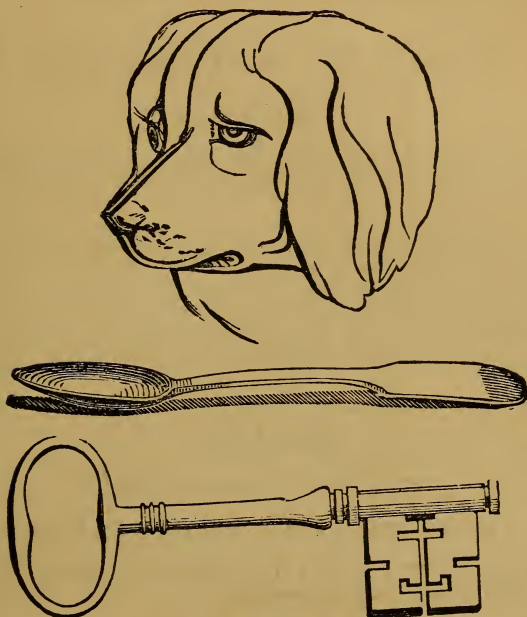
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